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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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BY

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HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

General Editor :

JOHN HENRY BURN, B.D., F.R.S.E.

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

HANDBOOKS OF
ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY

- I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH (to A.D. 800). By J. H. MAUDE, M.A.
- II. THE SAXON CHURCH AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST (A.D. 800-1135). By C. T. CRUTT-
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- VI. THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE EIGH-
TEENTH CENTURY. By ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.

First Published in 1910

PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THE initial impulse to undertake the task of editing this series was given me, so far back as 1897, by the late Dr Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London. He was good enough to suggest the names of some of the writers whom I should invite to collaborate; and he drew up what he called "a rough scheme," of which the following is a modification.

- I. The Foundations of the English Church (to A.D. 800).
- II. The Anglo-Saxon Church and the Norman Conquest (A.D. 800-1135):
- III. The Mediæval Church and the Papacy (A.D. 1135-1485).
- IV. The Reformation Period (A.D. 1485-1603).
- V. The Struggle with Puritanism (A.D. 1603-1702).
- VI. The English Church in the Eighteenth Century.

The names of the six scholars, who have accepted the invitation to contribute to this series, are a sufficient guarantee that the work is conceived in no narrow spirit of partisanship, but with the earnest desire to do justice to all parties, whether religious or political. The Editor has thought it right to allow to each writer the utmost freedom of treatment consistent with the general plan of the series. If here and there this has resulted in some slight divergence of view between one volume and another,

he believes that it will prove rather advantageous than detrimental to the utility of the work ; for much would be lost, and very little gained, by preventing a writer from giving free expression to his own view of the facts, and of the inferences to be drawn from them.

J. H. BURN

THE PARSONAGE
BALLATER

PREFACE

IN a period of which so much is known, and of which the materials for additional knowledge are so abundant, as is the case with the eighteenth century, the writer of a handbook sees from the first that a very great deal, of even important matters, will have to be omitted: and one of his chief difficulties will be to decide which topics must be selected in order to give the reader an intelligible and coherent picture—faithful, as far as it goes—of the period as a whole. In such circumstances, no two persons' judgments will always agree as to what should be sacrificed, and what ought, however concisely, to be preserved. It is, therefore, inevitable that some readers will think that, in the present volume, some features of the age have been retained which might well have given place to others that are passed over in silence. It is hoped that such readers will believe that, at any rate, nothing worse than an error of judgment has been committed. The topics presented to the reader have been selected with a view to giving a correct impression of the leading characteristics of the century. They have not been selected in order to give a particular impression, favourable or unfavourable, of this or that religious body, or of this or that leader. And it has been thought better not to load the pages with details, which, however interesting, might blur rather than deepen, the general effect.

There is room also for difference of opinion as to the way

in which the century ought to be subdivided. It is believed that the points of division which have been adopted are intelligible and tenable; for the years 1717, 1737, 1760, 1787 are distinguished by events of sufficient importance to justify a division of some kind, and they mark off periods which are fairly equal in length. It is in the three central periods, each of which runs to twenty or more years, that the special characteristics of the century are most abundantly found.

The notes show the writer's obligations to many who have written upon this period during the last fifty or sixty years. They also show that original authorities have not been neglected. It is from the latter that the student of the eighteenth century will derive the most abundant instruction and delight.

DULANY, BIDEFORD
CHRISTMAS, 1909

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE
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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE writer on this period of English History is confronted with two great difficulties: (1) the vast amount of material that is available as evidence and comment; and (2) the apparently contradictory character of the evidence as to the goodness or badness of the age which he has to study.

(1) It is quite true, as regards the first part of the century, that brilliant as is the literature of the age of Queen Anne, there is hardly anything of the first rank that can be placed under the head of contemporary history. When one has mentioned Swift and Bolingbroke, one has named the only two authors of really great talent who attempted to write the history of their own times; and neither of these two has done so with anything like completeness. Nevertheless, even for this part of the period there are smaller writers, of whom perhaps the best is the continuator (? Tindal) of Rapin's *History of England*. But, as the century advances, the number of persons who write memoirs, letters, and other materials for history, becomes very large indeed. One need do no

more than mention such writers as Horace Walpole, Lord Hervey, Lady Mary W. Montagu, John Byrom, Lord Chesterfield, Gray, Burke, Fanny Burney, and many others, some of whom will be mentioned below. No doubt the majority of these writers were not specially concerned with the affairs of the English Church, or with religion of any kind. But the affairs of Church and State were so closely intertwined that every leading statesman had an immense influence on the Church, and, either from choice or necessity, many of the clergy, and most of the bishops, were politicians. If we wish to know the worst,—and sometimes more than is true,—about the clergy, we shall find it often enough in the pages of Horace Walpole. Sidelights as to the way in which statesmen regarded the Church, and Church appointments, appear from time to time in the *Memoirs* of Lord Hervey. And much that bears directly upon the English Church, and the condition of religion in England will be found in the speeches and writings of Burke; as also in the cogitations of the Essayists, in the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, *Guardian*, *Rambler*, and *Idler*.

But the student who has made himself acquainted with most of what has been mentioned above will still have a vast mass of literature to explore in the writings of those who treated of religious questions in general, or of the Church of England in particular. It will suffice to mention the voluminous pamphlets, sermons, and more substantial writings in connexion with the Trinitarian controversies, Deism, Romanism, the Nonjurors, Nonconformity, the Bangorian Controversy, Convocation, Clerical Subscription, Methodism and the Evangelical movement. Nor can the philosophical writers be neglected, least of all those who had such influence upon religious thought as Locke, Berkeley, Butler, and Hume.

Add to all this original material the treatment of it in our own day by such writers as Abbey and Overton, Bogue and Bennett, Burton, Coxe, Hallam, Hunt, Lecky, Macaulay, Lord Mahon, Perry, Leslie Stephen, Skeats, Stoughton, and Thackeray, and we have an amount of literature to be read, or at least to be consulted, which may well seem to be overwhelming.

(2) But, great as is the difficulty of mastering the more important portions of the multitudinous data, the difficulty of drawing from these facts correct conclusions as to the character of the eighteenth century is at least as great. Was it, on the whole, a good or a bad age in Church and State? Was it one on which Englishmen and Churchmen can look with thankfulness and pride; or one which they study, when they are compelled to study it, with shame and distress? Or is it of that chessboard character, which can be called either black or white, according to the squares to which we direct our attention? If the last view is nearest to the truth, it would seem as if, both at the time and during the century which followed, it was the black squares which attracted most attention. The eighteenth century is commonly condemned as a dull, coarse, irreligious age, in which politicians were faithless and venal; in which bishops were place-seekers, who neglected all duties, except controversial pamphleteering; in which the clergy were ignorant, vulgar, and fanatical, nominally Hanoverian, but Jacobite at heart; in which the educated laity were either sceptics, who questioned the fundamentals of revealed religion, or scoffers who openly derided all forms of religion alike; and in which the upper classes, whether educated or not, set an example of unbridled profligacy, which the lower orders, sunk in materialism and misery,

were only too ready, according to their opportunities, to follow.¹

As to the frequency, fulness, and intensity of these black squares, there can be no doubt: the evidence is abundant and indisputable. The question is, whether there were not also very many white squares, which are too often forgotten, although the evidence for their existence is ample, if only people have the patience to look for it and the discernment to recognize it. There is also the further question, whether, as regards the shortcomings and wrongdoings of the Church of England, there is not very much to be pleaded in extenuation, seeing that before the century was twenty years old, the Church was handcuffed and gagged, and otherwise most ungenerously treated by statesmen who despised it, and cared only to use it for their own purposes. It is quite true that the history of the English Church during the eighteenth century is the history of a steady and grievous decline. But it is also true that a great deal of that decline, perhaps far the greater part of it, was due much more to the ill-treatment which it received than to its own spontaneous negligence and misconduct.

It is not necessary here to recapitulate in detail the dark features of the period: many of them will be evident enough in the pages which follow. But it will be useful to summarize briefly the leading items which ought to be placed on the other side of the account, in order that the reader may be on the look-out for them, and also may bear them in mind, while he is considering the terribly frequent and very conspicuous black pages in the history. It is impossible to read any account of this century with-

¹ Carlyle, in 1832, called it "a decrepit, death-sick Era, when Cant had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same, that life was a lie, and the earth Beelzebub's,"—(*Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson*.)

out becoming aware of the truth of many of the charges which are brought against it. But it is quite possible to know a great deal about those times, and yet not notice, or not give due weight to, the many bright and even beautiful features, which go a considerable way towards redeeming its blackened character. To speak of either Church or State or society in general as being, throughout that century, rotten to the core, is to use intelligible but extravagant language. There was much that was rotten, but the heart remained sound: otherwise recovery would have been impossible, or would have come with much less sureness and completeness. And it is very much to be noticed that the worst features of the age become most conspicuous after the Church had begun to sink into torpor in consequence of the cruel treatment which it had received; and that it was when the National Church began to revive, that the nation began to recover enlightenment and moral earnestness. In more ways than one the special features of the eighteenth century are found, at any rate in their fulness, only in about seventy or seventy-five years; and this is specially true of its bad characteristics. In quality, the opening years belong to the seventeenth century, and the closing years to the nineteenth century, rather than to the period which lies between them. And, even as regards the longer and darker period, there is much that can be said by way of eulogy. The testimony of Mr Miller, in his *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803), may be quoted here. •

“In no period have the various branches of science, art, and letters received, at the same time, such liberal accessions of light and refinement, and been made so remarkably to illustrate and enlarge each other. Never did the inquirer stand at the confluence of so many

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streams of knowledge as at the close of the eighteenth century."

And he goes on to point out that, among the learned professions, the clergy produced as many authors of distinction as any other; also that, among the laymen, whose works adorn literature, there were plenty whose Christianity was as conspicuous as their ability. In the former class we think of Swift, Waterland, Bentley, Berkeley, Butler, Law, Warburton, and Paley; in the latter of Addison, Sir Isaac Newton, Johnson, Burke, and Cowper.

In summarizing some of the brighter features of the eighteenth century, let us begin with *literature*. It was, no doubt, a prosaic age. Its poetry was intellectual rather than emotional,—very often didactic, and frequently controversial. Form was cultivated to the uttermost, in order to give point to controversy; but there is serious lack of imagination.¹ Wordsworth has pointed out that, excepting the *Nocturnal Reverie* of Lady Winchilsea and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of her friend Pope, the poetry of the period between *Paradise Lost* (1663) and *The Seasons* (1726-30) does not contain a single new image of external nature, or a familiar image that shows genuine imagination. Indeed, sometimes there is as much poetry in the prose, as in the polished verse, of this literary age. For instance, is not the *Vicar of Wakefield* as rich in poetry as the *Essay on Man*? Yet this prosaic age has commanding merits.

The literary productiveness of the age is in itself extraordinary, quite independently of the very high quality of the best things that were produced. Quite early in

¹ "I fear," says Gray, "the quickness and delicate impatience of these polished times, in which we live, are but the forerunners of the decline of all those beautiful arts which depend upon the imagination."—(*Essay on the Poems of Lydgate.*)

the century Swift calls attention to this fact in an amusing adaptation of Herodotus IV. vii. "From such elements as these, I am alive to behold the day, wherein the Corporation of Authors can out-vie all its brethren in the field. A happiness derived to us, with a great many others, from our Scythian ancestors; among whom the number of pens was so infinite, that the Grecian eloquence had no other way of expressing it than by saying, That in the regions far to the North it was hardly possible for a man to travel, the very air was so replete with feathers."¹ In the same section, however, Swift hints that diligent readers are not as common as diligent writers. "The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold; either first, to serve them as some men do Lords, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance; or secondly, which is the choicer method, to get a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole Book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail."

If there is nothing that is quite of the very best, yet the literature of the eighteenth century has a sustained richness and fulness not to be found elsewhere. The numbers of writers of high excellence and power is very great, and their variety is very remarkable. Moreover, they are accompanied by a multitude of authors, whose works, though hardly in the second rank, are still read with pleasure, and still count for something in English literature. In what other century could we find twenty-five such names as these?—Addison (1672-1719), Congreve (1670-1729), Steele (1672-1729), Bentley (1662-1742), Pope (1688-1744), Swift (1667-1745), Thomson (1700-48), Bolingbroke (1678-1751), Butler (1692-1752), Berkeley (1685-1753), Fielding (1707-54), Law (1686-1761), Richardson

¹ *Tale of a Tub*, sect. vii.

(1689-1761), Young (1681-1765), Gray (1716-71), Goldsmith (1728-74), Hume (1711-76), Johnson (1709-84), Adam Smith (1723-90), Gibbon (1737-94), Boswell (1740-95), Burns (1759-96), Burke (1729-97), Cowper (1731-1800), Sheridan (1751-1816). And these twenty-five are very far indeed from exhausting the list of notables. We shall do but scant justice to the literature of the eighteenth century, unless we add fifty or sixty more, not a few of that might justly have been placed in the same rank with some of those which have been already named. Let us add thirty more, and they would, by themselves, make no mean list in any age: Parnell (1679-1718), Prior (1664-1721), Collier (1650-1726), Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Defoe (1661-1731), Gay (1685-1732), Mandeville (1670-1733), Arbuthnot (1667-1735), Waterland (1683-1740), Savage (1698-1743), Hutcheson (1694-1746), Middleton (1683-1750), Hartley (1705-57), Collins (1721-59), Lady Mary W. Montagu (1689-1762), Sterne (1713-65), Akenside (1721-70), Smollett (1721-71), Chesterfield (1694-1773), Warburton (1698-1779), Blackstone (1723-80), Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), W. Robertson (1721-93), Horace Walpole (1717-97), Priestley (1733-1804), Paley (1743-1805), Blake (1757-1827), Bentham (1748-1832), Crabbe (1754-1832), and Fanny Burney (1752-1840). But another thirty or more might be added, and even this list will contain not a few distinguished names, and leave others unmentioned. Norris (1657-1711), Hickeys (1642-1715), Burnet (1643-1715), Rowe (1674-1718), Lady Winchilsea (d. 1720), Lady Rachel Russell (1636-1723), Jeremiah Jones (1693-1724), Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), Derham (1657-1735), Hearne (1678-1735), Strype (1643-1737), Tickell (1686-1740), W. Somerville (1675-1742), Watts (1674-1748), Doddridge (1702-51), Carte (1686-1754),



Dyer (1699-1758), Orrery (1707-62), Byrom (1692-1763), Chatterton (1752-70), B. Stillingfleet (1702-71), Tucker (1705-74), Garrick (1717-79), Charles Wesley (1707-88), Price (1723-91), Gilbert White (1720-93), Reid (1710-96), Mason (1724-97), Warton (1722-1800), Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), Charlotte Lennox (1720-1804), Elizabeth Carter (1717-1808), Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), T. Somerville (1741-1830).

Let us look at a few of the notable writings produced in this age. Granted that there is a marked decadence in dramatic productions, yet are not *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Rivals*, and *A School for Scandal* among the best of such things? ¹ In the *Life of Dr Johnson* we have the very best of English biographies; and in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* one of the greatest of historical works. For finish in versification, the *Essay on Man* is unrivalled, excepting by other works of Pope: and, as regards finish in prose, especially of the light and graceful kind, the *Spectator* is unsurpassed. In robust English, used for purposes of fierce satire, we shall not find anything to excel the *Tale of a Tub* and some other writings of Swift. And yet, as a political writer, Daniel Defoe is not much behind him, while in inventive power he is perhaps Swift's equal. As fiction, *Robinson Crusoe* is more credible, and perhaps not very much less ingenious, than *Gulliver's Travels*. For influence upon thinkers and workers, not many have excelled the writings of Berkeley, Hume, Adam Smith, and Bentham. And, as literature, whose letters rank higher than those of Gray, Cowper, and Horace Walpole—to say nothing of those of Lady Mary W. Montagu, Lady Rachel Russell, and Lord Chesterfield? And of the same

¹ The restoration of Shakspeare to the stage by Garrick, under the influence of Pope, Theobald, Warburton, and Johnson, is among the good features of the age.

general type we have Swift's and Wesley's Journals. In short, the capabilities of English prose, which had been discovered by Hooker and Bacon, had now been completely mastered. What had been a rare phenomenon in their age had become a common inheritance in the age of Addison, Swift, Berkeley, Johnson, Gibbon, and Burke.

Nor should translations from the classics, whether in poetry or in prose, be forgotten: Rowe's *Lucan*, Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Christopher Pitt's *Virgil* and *Vida*, and Gilbert West's *Pindar*; also Melmoth's *Letters of Pliny*, Middleton's *Letters of Cicero*, Hampton's *Polybius*, Franklin's *Sophocles*, *Horace* both by Francis and by Smart, Elizabeth Carter's *Epictetus*, and Spelman's *Xenophon*.¹

Among the various writings mentioned above, two classes were an entirely new birth. The periodic essay and works of fiction were creations of the eighteenth century. The *Tatler* (April 1709-January 1711), *Spectator* (March 1711-December 1712), *Guardian* (March 1713-October 1714), *Freeholder* (December 1715-June 1716), *Rambler* (March 1750-March 1752), *Adventurer* (November 1752-March 1754), and *Idler* (April 1758-April 1760), constituted a new feature in the literary world, and an important one.² These weekly or daily essays were very widely read, and were a powerful instrument in educating public opinion and taste; and the moral influence of a constant supply of literature, which was at once attractive and pure, was very considerable. Nor was the influence of works of fiction very much less.

¹ During the years 1701-1751 about 250 editions of classics were published at Oxford.

² The *Tatler* had been preceded by Tutchin's *Observator* (April 1702), Defoe's *Review* (February 1704), and Leslie's *Rehearsal* (August 1704); but these were political and polemical periodicals.

Under this head are included novels and tales, not dramas and plays. Fiction in this sense begins with Defoe.¹ His *Shortest Way with Dissenters* had taught him how like the truth sheer invention can be made to look; for the people whose brutality he was exposing were taken in, and thought that he was their ally. People like facts; and it is much easier to invent facts than to find them. Hence we have the immortal *Robinson Crusoe* and its endless progeny.

When we look more particularly at religious literature, there are some great names. Berkeley in metaphysics, and Butler in philosophical apologetics, still hold the field. Earlier in the century we have works which are still of great value; Wake's *State of the Church of England in those Councils, Synods, Convocations, etc.*, Law's *Serious Call*, Wall's *Infant Baptism*, Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, and Waterland's *Critical History of the Athanasian Creed*. In controversial writings the age is only too rich; and it will suffice to mention the names of Conybeare, Atterbury, Wake, Kennett, Warburton, and Paley. The sermons of Beveridge are still read by some, and the hymns of Watts and of the Wesleys are still sung by thousands. Nor should it be forgotten that most of the best poems of S. T. Coleridge,—often very rich in religious feeling,—together with some of those of Wordsworth and of Southey, belong to the eighteenth century, so far as date of composition is concerned. And what a change from Parnell, Prior, and Pope to Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge! A century which has seen the workings of that change occupies no unimportant place in the history of English literature.

Moreover, it was a century in which authors not only

¹ W. J. Dawson, *Makers of English Fiction*, pp. 3-11.

abounded, but very often had their powers recognized in a very substantial way. There was, it is true, no Augustus on the throne;¹ neither Anne nor the Georges had any taste for literature. Nor was there, as at the present time, any great reading public, that in a few weeks might make a book a financial success. But there was "a vast system of bounties and premiums. There was, perhaps, never a time at which the rewards of literary merit were so splendid, at which men who could write well found such easy admittance into the most distinguished society, and to the highest honours of the state."² Rowe was Poet Laureate and held several lucrative offices. Addison was Secretary of State. Prior was Commissioner of Customs, and was sent to Paris in 1711 to negotiate what became the Peace of Utrecht (1713), and was known as "Matt's Peace."³ Stepney was envoy to Vienna in 1702 and to the Hague in 1706. Congreve had no sooner brought out his comedies (1693-1700) than he began to be rewarded with a series of offices which placed him beyond the reach of poverty. Newton was made Master of the Mint, and was knighted in 1705. Steele was Commissioner of Stamps. Gay was taken by Clarendon to Hanover as secretary of legation in 1714. Ambrose Phillips, John Hughes, Arthur Mainwaring, and Thomas Tickell are similar instances: and it is hardly necessary to mention the pension to Dr Johnson. But Johnson's star rose rather

¹ George I., however, gave Steele £500 for the *Conscious Lovers*, which had been dedicated to the King.

² Macaulay, *Essays*, i. p. 377; Minto, *Literature of the Georgian Era*, chap. i.

³ Hearne mentions Prior's being "splendidly interr'd" at Westminster; "and there will be a stately Monument erected in the said Abbey to his Memory, to which will be fixed a Bust of himself, wrought by one of the finest Artists in Europe, at the Expence of the late King of France" (30 Sept. 1721). Was this in gratitude for "Matt's Peace"?

late for this system of patronage: it was dying out, and the new system, of multitudes of readers, had not yet begun.

Although only a small portion of it has become literature, we ought not to pass by in silence the oratorical power which, throughout this period, was exhibited in the English Parliament, and especially in the Lower House. The eighteenth century was "the Golden Age of parliamentary oratory: no modern assembly has matched for lofty eloquence the Houses of Commons that listened to the speeches of the two Pitts, Burke, Fox, and Sheridan."¹ Grattan might be added to these, and a distinction be made with regard to Burke. It was not as "parliamentary oratory" to be listened to, that Burke's speeches were great, but as literature to be read. Erskine, who heard the great speech on conciliating the American colonies, said that it drove people away when it was delivered, including those who read it again and again, and could hardly think of anything else, when it was printed. And Bolingbroke's oratory must have been of very high merit. Pitt said to Lord Stanhope that there was scarcely any loss in literature which he so deeply deplored, as that no adequate record of Bolingbroke's speeches should remain.² Lord Chesterfield said that Bolingbroke's "most familiar conversations" would bear to be printed "without the least correction as to method or style."

Along with the literature of the eighteenth century something ought to be said respecting its *art*; all the more so, because one of its greatest artists holds no mean place in literature. Ruskin has pronounced Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) to be "the prince of portrait painters,"

¹ Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, v. p. 224.

² Lord Mahon, *History of England*, i. p. 28.

and one of the "seven supreme colourists" in the world, the others being Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto, Veronese, Correggio, and Turner (1775-1851). Gainsborough (1727-88) is a worthy companion. "No artist," it has been said of him, "was ever at once more new, more natural, and more English"; and he often approached Reynolds so nearly "that the distance between them is scarcely measurable." Allan Ramsay (1713-84), in his prime was by some preferred to Reynolds, especially as a painter of women. Romney (1734-1802), if not quite equal to Reynolds and Gainsborough, belongs to the same great English school. We must add Sir Thomas Laurence (1769-1830), Opie, "the Cornish wonder" (1761-1807), and Sir William Beechey (1753-1839). Earlier in the century, we have the great pictorial reproducer of contemporary life, especially in its humorous and horrible elements, William Hogarth (1697-1764), and his companion and fellow-worker, Francis Hayman (1708-76); also the animal-painters, J. Wootton and G. Lambert, who both died in 1765. Nor must Paul Sandby (1725-1809), who helped to teach Englishmen the beauties of England, be forgotten; to whom may be added Sir Henry Raeburn, Nat. Hone, Thomas Stothard, John Hoppner, and Robert Freebairn. No country on the Continent can, during this century, show such a list of painters. In another sphere of art we have Flaxman (1755-1826) and the Wedgwoods.

From literature and art let us turn to *education*. There is plenty of evidence to show that the teaching which was supplied in schools for all ranks and in the Universities was often very wretched. Many of the poor went without any teaching at all.¹ But there were exceptions. Competent and conscientious masters of schools, such as

¹ *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., p. 62.

John Coleridge of Ottery St Mary, did exist. The *Guardian* of 22nd May 1713 (No. 62) gives a much better account of public schools than other reports would lead one to expect. Dr John Brown, writing in 1757, goes so far as to say that, "to do Justice to the Times, the most considerable of these Seminaries were never more ably supplied than at present."¹ And Bentley has left on record what reforms he carried out at Trinity College, Cambridge. The case of Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, who was taken from a village by Francis Cherry, the Nonjuror, educated, and sent to Oxford, was probably no isolated one. And it is quite certain that the Charity Schools were a noble and a very successful effort to supply sound instruction to the poor. Writing for Queen Anne's birthday in 1712, Addison says that these schools are the greatest instances of public spirit which the age has produced, and that it would be a good way of honouring the anniversary to give support to such schools.² Steele writes in the *Guardian* of 11th July 1713: "I have always looked on this institution of Charity-Schools, which, of late years, has so universally prevailed through the whole nation, as the glory of the age we live in."³ The S.P.C.K. was labouring in the same field. And, according to the *Idler*,⁴ it was a common thing for foreigners to remark how much better the lower orders in England were educated than the lower orders on the Continent; while in England it was sometimes said that they were over-educated and made discontented with their lot. Dissenters, in proportion to their numbers, were more vigorous in the cause of education than Churchmen were. They not only helped in promoting Charity

¹ *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, p. 30. George Fothergill, servitor at Queen's College, Oxford, gives a good account of the tuition there, 1722-26.—(*The Fothergills of Ravenstonedale*, pp. 67 ff.)

² *Spectator*, No. 294.

³ No. 105.

⁴ No. 7.

Schools; they had good institutions of their own. In some places the Nonconformist School was the only one to which parents could send their sons. Jealousy of these schools was one of the causes which led to the passing of the infamous Schism Act in 1714. In 1716, during a 'Church-in-danger' debate, Archbishop Sharp said that these Dissenting academies were a standing peril to the Church.

When the subject of *politics* is mentioned in connexion with the eighteenth century, people commonly think of Sir Robert Walpole as the representative statesman of the age, and think also of the gigantic system of bribery and corruption, intimidation and jobbery, which he kept up both inside and outside of Parliament. But even Walpole is not so black as he is painted. He did not say, "All men have their price." It was of *pretended patriots*, whose declarations of loyalty were dictated by interested views of themselves or their relatives, that he said, "All *these* men have their price";¹ which is a very different thing. And he did not initiate corruption in political life; he found it there, a legacy from Sunderland, and found that without it he would often be impotent. Bishop Burnet says that "by Sir John Trevor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, began the practice of buying off men":² and Trevor was convicted of taking a bribe of £1100 himself. For Walpole the emergency was great and prolonged: an unpopular king confronted by a dangerous pretender; ferocious political factions, ready to run all risks for the sake of injuring their opponents; an ignorant populace, clamouring for war

¹ Cox, *Memoirs of Walpole*, iv. p. 369. He added, "except the little Cornish baronet," Sir John Saint Aulyn, a Jacobite M.P. (Boase, *History of Exeter College*, p. cxxxvii).

² *Own Times*, 1690.

without counting the cost of it. By corrupt methods, because he saw no others ready to his hands, Walpole grappled with these difficulties, and, on the whole, with sound judgment and with success.¹ He was unscrupulous, and did very dirty work; but he did it to serve his country, and not for any selfish end other than that of retaining political power. He himself said that he was "no saint, no Spartan, no reformer"; it was all a matter of "business." He "bribed the English nation with their own money to continue free," says J. G. Phillimore.² Walpole's own way of putting it was that he was "obliged to bribe the Members, not to vote *against*, but *according to* their conscience." George I. said that he never had his equal for business. Dr Johnson, who neither as a moralist nor as a Tory was likely to be prejudiced in Walpole's favour, admitted that "he was the best minister this country ever had; and, if we would have let him, he would have kept the country in perpetual peace." Pericles on his deathbed claimed that no Athenian, through his fault, had ever had to wear mourning; and Walpole in 1736 said that, in the war just ended, 50,000 men had lost their lives, but not one Englishman. So honourable a statesman as Burke could say of him, that "the charge of systematic corruption" was perhaps less true of Walpole than of "any other minister who ever served the Crown for such a length of time." But, even when the account is summed up in a way that is very unfavourable to Walpole, we must remember that the century which produced him, produced also the two Pitts, Burke, and

¹ "Walpole has been censured as a minister who ruled by means of bribery and corruption; as if he had preferred that mode of government. The truth is, he had no choice."—(Massey, *Reign of George III.*, i. p. 2.)

² *Reign of George III.*, i. p. 127.

Wilberforce, to whom may be added statesmen with such great, though somewhat chequered characters, as Clive and Warren Hastings.

But it is as regards *religion* that the eighteenth century is specially condemned. The weighty words of Bishop Butler, in the Advertisement to the *Analogy* and in the opening of the Charge to the Durham clergy, are remembered and regarded as final; all the more so, as they are supported by plenty of evidence of a similar kind. Archbishop Leighton called the Church a fair carcass without spirit, excellent in doctrine and worship, but most corrupt in its administration. Bishop Burnet, in the Preface to the third edition of his *Pastoral Care*, expressed the opinion that in that time our clergy were less influential and more despised than those of any Church in Europe; not because of scandalous misconduct—their lives were decent enough—but because they had no earnestness or zeal. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote to Burnet, in sending him her translation of *Epictetus*, that there were more atheists among the fine ladies than among the lower sort of rakes. Bishop Berkeley said that it had become fashionable to deny religion, and ridicule was applied to such wrong purposes that a good Christian could hardly keep himself in countenance.¹ Whether Bishop Ken should be added to these witnesses, depends on the authorship of a book published as *Ichabod*, without his name, in 1663, and as *Expostularia*, with his name, after his death in 1711.²

Yet Butler himself points out that "there is a disposition in men to complain of the viciousness and corruption of

¹ Further evidence will be found in Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ch. ix.; Collins's *Butler*, pp. 93 ff.; Spooner's *Butler*, ch. ii.; Sydney's *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century*, *passim*.

² See Hearne, 31st May 1711. Plumtre accepts it as Ken's.

the age in which they live as greater than that of former ones."¹ His friend Secker, in a Charge to the Oxford clergy in 1738, says much the same. "Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason." But he thinks that there can be no doubt "that an open and profound disregard to religion is becoming the distinguishing characteristic of the present age." Lord Mahon insists on the necessity for caution in reading contemporary complaints of great evils, and points out that Simond and Sismondi have come to the conclusion, that, in political history, such complaints, so far from being evidence of suffering, are tokens of good government.² Be that as it may, the fact that so many of the writers of this age notice the corruption, and deplore it, in itself tends to show that much good still survived. It is when men do not care to remark the wickedness of their surroundings, still less to lament it, that things are desperate. "Whenever we can penetrate behind the public events which figure in history at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, indications are discernible which make it certain that a religious vitality of this description was far more widely diffused than is commonly supposed."³ Let us hear once more a witness already cited, and then look at certain facts. In his *Estimate of Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), a work which made a great sensation and quickly ran through seven editions, Dr John Brown says: "Observation, if attended by impartiality, may convince us that the character of the manners of this age and nation is by no means that of abandoned wickedness and

¹ *Sermon* xi. 1.

² *History of England*, i. p. 2. Simond quotes the growls of English people against their rulers as an illustration.

³ R. A. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 391.

profligacy ; rather the age is one of vain, luxurious, and selfish effeminacy."

In looking at the facts, it will be found that brighter features are more common in the first quarter of the century than in the next two quarters. From 1720 or 1725 onwards we have an unquestionable decline in the history of the English Church and of religion generally. Then the Methodist and Evangelical movements begin to bear good fruits, and the influence of the teaching of such moralists as Butler and Johnson has a marked effect ; and, however dark the political outlook in the last decade of the century may be, there can be no doubt that in religion and morality a better era has begun. Even through the worst period of the fifty or sixty years in the middle of the century, the darkness that might be felt was broken in not a few places.

At the outset, there was the Queen's noble example in founding "Queen Anne's Bounty." That need not be more than mentioned. In 1710 and 1711 came the excellent proposal, partly of Convocation and partly of the House of Commons, that the spiritual needs of London and Westminster should be met by building fifty new churches at a cost not exceeding £350,000.¹ These churches were begun on a very costly scale, and in the end only eleven or twelve seem to have been erected, which was already a sign that a darker time had begun. But the idea was a grand one, and was heartily welcomed in Parliament ; and what was done was no mean addition to the Church's power for good in the metropolis. And that power was used. Edward Stevens, who died in 1706, had a daily celebration of the Holy Communion at St Giles's, Cripplegate ; and there were several churches in which there was a

¹ Tindal's continuation of Rapin, book xxx. ch. iv.

celebration every Sunday at 6 or 7 or 8 a.m. or at noon. Swift started a weekly celebration at St Patrick's, Dublin. In 1714 there were seventy-five churches in London which were open every day. Six of these churches had three daily services, and five had four daily services.¹ Let us take the middle of the nineteenth century and see how it compares with this record. In 1849 there were twice as many churches in London as there were in 1714 ; but only forty-one of them were open daily, and not one had four daily services. It is less easy to get statistics of provincial towns and country parishes ; but it would probably be found that there also there were plenty of exceptions to the general stagnation.

Already, in the reign of Charles II., " Religious Societies " had been founded, to counteract the profligacy of the age, and to promote attendance at the services of the Church. Under the influence of Beveridge and Antony Horneck they developed considerably in the reign of William III., and became very numerous and very effective. Early in the eighteenth century there were nearly a hundred of these Societies in London and Westminster alone ; and they spread to other large towns, and even to Ireland. In Dublin there were ten. The objects set before the members were such as these : " to love one another ; when reviled, not to revile again ; to wrong no man ; to pray, if possible, seven times a day ; to keep close to the Church of England." From these " Religious Societies " there had sprung, before 1700, " Societies for the Reformation of Manners." The differences between the two were these. The former aimed at *inducing* people to reform their lives

¹ James Paterson, *Pietas Londinensis*, 1714. " St Anne, on the west Side of Dean-street by Soho. Here are Prayers four Times in the Day, viz., at Six in the Summer, and Seven in the Winter, and Eleven ; and at Four and Six in the Evening thro' the year " (p. 27) ; also at Lambeth Chapel (p. 129), St Laurence Jewry (p. 132), St Paul in Covent Garden (p. 227), and the Chapel in Great Queen-street (p. 249).

by personal piety, and to be loyal members of the Church of England. The latter aimed at *compelling* people to reform, by putting the laws in motion against them, and they had both Churchmen and Dissenters among their members. Dr Josiah Woodward, in 1701, says that these Religious Societies "have recommended the Church of England to other Reformed Churches, and may in time draw multitudes to our communion. . . . And here I cannot but call upon our Dissenting Brethren, that, as they have manifested a Christian Spirit in assisting us to suppress Vice, they would do no less in endeavouring to discountenance Strife, and to restore Unity."¹ Calamy says that in 1699 he preached to the Society for Reformation of Manners. "It deserves observation that in this Society the Dissenters, from the first erection of it, were as heartily concerned as the Established Church."²

It was members of these two kinds of societies, who, under the leadership of the admirable Dr Thomas Bray, founded the S.P.C.K. (1698) and the S.P.G. (1701). It was Dr Bray who established libraries of devotional and useful books in the American colonies. The value of such libraries out there convinced him that similar institutions would be very useful at home; and he set to work to found parochial libraries and libraries for the use of the clergy, which in 1709 were protected by Act of Parliament, with trustees who were styled "Associates of Dr Bray." This trust has quite recently been reorganized. Libraries were also sent out to the West Indies, Africa, and Bengal. Dr Willis of Lincoln's Inn gave £6000 towards a mission "to instruct the Indians."

Another piece of evidence, which shows that there was

¹ *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies.* By Josiah Woodward, D.D., 1701, pp. 15, 64, 87.

Own Life, i. p. 410.

much reality of earnestness still surviving among Churchmen, is found in the efforts which were made during this century to bring about union with other Christian bodies. Besides the well-meant, but not always wise, endeavours to bring back Dissenters at home into the English Church, there were attempts to draw Churches on the Continent closer to the Church of England. Early in the century it was proposed to introduce the Anglican Liturgy and Episcopal Orders into Prussia.¹ Bouet, Prussian Minister in England, told Frederick I.,² King of Prussia and brother-in-law of our George I., in 1711, that conformity between the Lutheran and English Churches would be welcomed in England. Frederick himself held to the *Corpus Evangelicorum*, as did George I. in Hanover. Archbishop Sharp continued to work for the proposed conformity; but political interests stood in the way, and nothing was done. In 1717 we have the famous correspondence of Archbishop Wake with Du Pin and Piers de Girardin respecting the possibility of union between the English and the Gallican Churches; and about the same time the correspondence of the Nonjuring bishops, Campbell, Gadderar, Collier, and Brett with the Oriental Church, as to possible union with that Communion.³ Wake seems to have seen that nothing could come of the latter attempt, and in fact both failed. But these serious efforts to heal the divisions of Christendom would not have been made at all, if the English Church had been sunk in the apathy and indifferentism which

¹ Thoresby to Hearne, 21st October, 1710. The Archbishop of York had shown him a letter from Jablonsky on the subject.

² It was in his reign that the Deist Toland visited Prussia in 1701, a visit of which he published an *Account* in 1705. See also Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, i. pp. 367-377.

³ A similar effort is now being made by the Old Catholics. The Nonjurors were at a serious disadvantage. They were an insignificant body, and they had a schism in their own ranks.

is commonly attributed to its life in the eighteenth century.¹

Then there is the evidence of the diocese of Sodor and Man, which for more than half the century (1697-1755) was under the rule of the saintly Thomas Wilson. No Church that can produce such an episcopate as that can be regarded as hopelessly corrupt.

Nor must we overlook the fact that the much-abused Latitudinarians did a great deal towards promoting a spirit of comprehension, without which a national Church can hardly exist. But for them, a rigid exclusiveness would have prevailed, which would have been very detrimental to the Church's usefulness, if not fatal to its existence. And the steady increase of toleration, and the advance, however slow, towards true religious liberty, is one of the great characteristics of the whole period.

We must set it to the credit of the Law rather than the Church that the monstrous evils connected with Fleet marriages were put a stop to by Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act in 1753. The evils were enormous, causing ruin to individuals and misery to families; but overstatements have been made. It was said that in one year the notorious Alexander Keith had married thousands of people. This assertion has been exaggerated into the statement that he "used to marry on an average 6000 couples every year."² The passing of the Act which put an end to this nefarious traffic must be counted among the great moral gains of the century. It was assented to by all the Bishops, although it treated matrimonial contracts, even when solemnized with regular religious

¹ See below, ch. iii.

² There were, however, so many disreputable clergy engaged in this traffic, that the total number of such marriages may have amounted in some years to 6000.

ceremonies, as absolute nullities, if certain purely legal requirements were wanting.¹

Under this same head of religion we may take account of the moral influence of Dr Johnson. He was a many-sided dictator in English society; but it was as a moralist that he was specially respected during the last twenty years of his life (1764-84), and his moral influence was closely connected with his religion. To suppose that the reformation in manners which marked the latter part of the century was entirely, or even mainly, due to him is greatly to overrate his influence; but in that reformation he had a very honourable share. He was "so honest in purpose, so kind and pure in heart, so full of humour and reasonable sweetness, and yet so trenchant, and at need so grim, that he never sank to be the figure-head of a clique, nor ever lost the balance of sympathy with readers of every rank and age. His influence was so wide, and withal so wholesome, that . . . he has raised a standard of personal conduct that everyone admits."² Lord Mahon, although he exaggerates in claiming for Johnson that he was the first to turn the literary current in favour of revealed religion, and "mainly prepared for the reaction which succeeded," says truly enough that, "though not in Orders, he did the Church of England better service than most of those who at that listless era ate her bread."³ And he is so human with it all. As his own philosopher, Imlac, says in *Rasselas*: "The teachers of morality discourse like angels, but they live like men."⁴

In conclusion, it will be worth while to quote the opinions of one or two writers who have taken a more

¹ Horace Walpole, *Letters*, 17th July 1753.

² E. Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 282.

³ *History of England*, vi. p. 313.

⁴ *Rasselas*, ch. xviii.

cheerful view of the eighteenth century than is commonly done either by contemporaries or by later authorities.

Let us begin with Dr Johnson. "The present age, though not likely to shine hereafter among the most splendid periods of history, has yet given examples of charity which may be very properly recommended to imitation.¹ The equal distribution of wealth which long commerce has produced does not enable any single hand to raise edifices of piety like fortified cities, to appropriate manors to religious uses, or deal out such large and lasting beneficence as was scattered over the land in ancient times by those who possessed counties or provinces. But no sooner is a new species of misery brought to view, and a design of relieving it professed, than every hand is open to contribute something, every tongue is busied in solicitation, and every art of pleasure is employed for a time in the interest of virtue" (*Idler*, No. 4).

Perhaps Dr Johnson was too near to the scene to estimate it rightly: the judgment of writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may be more trustworthy. Dr John Hunt has given his view of the time. "The eighteenth century was not entirely the reign of death. Our obligations to it are greater than we commonly suppose. It was the golden age of English practical common sense. To it we owe the cultivation of the spirit of inquiry and the exercise of the faculty of reasoning. It was something to have fanaticism and superstition chased out of the world. A wave of reaction indeed came with the extravagances of the first Methodists; but

¹ Dr John Brown, writing in 1757, calls attention to "the many noble Foundations for the Relief of the Miserable and the Friendless; the frequent and generous Assistance given to the Unfortunate, who cannot be admitted into these Foundations: all these are such indisputable proofs of a national Humanity, as it were the highest Injustice not to acknowledge and applaud" (*Estimate*, pp. 21, 22). See also W. Cowper's Letter to J. Hill, 16th December 1792.

this was only in accordance with the known laws of progress. Most of the great religious institutions which now flourish in the fulness of their strength were begun in the eighteenth century" (*Religious Thought in England from the Reformation to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, iii. p. 400).¹

In a similar tone Leslie Stephen says that after the death of Queen Anne we enter a new period in literature and politics, and approach "the very heart of the eighteenth century; the century, as its enemies used to say, of coarse utilitarian aims, of religious indifference, and political corruption; or, as I prefer to say, the century of sound commonsense and growing toleration, and of steady social and industrial development. . . . There were then no troublesome people with philanthropic or political or religious nostrums, proposing to turn the world upside down and introduce an improptu millennium" (*English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*; p. 97).

Still more recently we have the view of W. H. Fitchett. "In some respects the eighteenth century is the most ill-used period in English History. It is the Cinderella of the centuries. . . . Nobody has a good word to say about it. Carlyle sums it up in a bitter phrase: 'Soul extinct; stomach well alive.' Yet a century cannot be condensed into an epigram, least of all into one written in gall. . . . The eighteenth century is, for England, a chain of great names and great events. It found England, Scotland, and Ireland separate kingdoms; it left them united. If it took from us the United States, it gave us Canada, India, and Australia. If Lord North ruled England for twelve sad years, William Pitt ruled it for

¹ A similar estimate will be found in "A Few Words about the Eighteenth Century" in *The Choice of Books and other Literary Pieces* by Frederic Harrison. He includes the Continent, especially France and Germany, in his survey.

twenty years of splendour. . . . Blenheim was fought the year after Wesley was born, and the Nile the year he died.¹ The century between such events cannot have been inglorious. It was certainly a century of social and political growth. The England of George III. and of Pitt is a vast advance on the England of Queen Anne and of Walpole" (*Wesley and his Century*, pp. 3, 4).²

¹ Wesley, however, died 1791; the Battle of the Nile was fought 1798.

² See also T. Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*, Introduction, esp. pp. xxv-xxxvi.

CHAPTER II

FROM A.D. 1701 TO THE SILENCING OF CONVOCATION IN 1717

THE turn of the century was marked by some notable events. Chief among these was the passing of the Act of Settlement (12 and 13 William III., c. 2), by which it was enacted "that whosoever shall hereafter come to the possession of this Crown, shall joyn in communion with the Church of England as by Law established." George, Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving child of the Princess Anne, had died 29th July 1700, at the age of eleven, an event which greatly raised the hopes of the Jacobites. There was some expectation that William III. would marry again. But, when he opened the new Parliament in 1701, he recommended that a Protestant succession should be otherwise secured; and by the Act of Settlement the Electress Sophia and her heirs were placed in the succession. This received the royal assent, 12th June.

The feeling against Rome, which thus found very practical expression, was still very strong in Great Britain, and it is a fact which must be kept steadily in view throughout the century. The nation was fully resolved, not merely that it would never again accept Roman jurisdiction, but that it would never again accept a Romanist as its sovereign. Moreover, every Romanist in the kingdom must be rendered impotent. All thoughts, not merely of generosity, but of the most elementary justice,

vanished from the minds of the men of that age, when they were confronted with Romanism. The laws against Papists were the worst of all the persecuting laws. They make modern Englishmen ashamed of their forefathers. But in condemning them we must remember the horrible persecutions which Romanists had inflicted on Protestants in almost every country in Europe. Englishmen of that day had not forgotten the plots of Somerville, Throgmorton, Babington, and others, against Elizabeth, nor the more recent Gunpowder Plot. Even where these memories, to say nothing of the fires of Smithfield, had ceased to excite, there were the tyrannical acts of James II., under which thousands of persons still living had suffered. Besides which, the nation was constantly being reminded of the terrible sufferings which Rome still inflicted upon Protestants. Tidings of such things were frequently coming to hand. But far more potent than any diffusion of news were the narratives of the sufferers themselves, who streamed across from the Continent to find a refuge in England. Nearly every large town had its colony of refugees, who had been coming over since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 22nd October 1685. In 1691 Stanhope saw numbers of heretics burned in Majorca. In 1706 Joseph Wilcocks wrote to Burnet and described the burning of four persons at Lisbon in the presence of the King. One woman lived for half an hour in the flames, and one man for an hour. After the Peace of Utrecht (April 1713) England obtained the release of 188 French Protestants from the galleys, where some of them had been for years. In 1717, at Anduze, 77 Protestants were surprised at a meeting, the men sent to the galleys, and the women to prison. In 1745 and 1746, in Dauphiné, 277 Protestants were sent to the galleys. Between then and 1759 ten persons were burned in Spain. Englishmen were never allowed to

forget of what atrocities Romanism was capable, when it had a free hand.

At least as potent as these genuine atrocities was the absolutely baseless, but generally believed fiction, that the Papists had caused the Fire of London.¹ The Monument originally had three inscriptions, two in Latin and one in English: the last ran thus: "This pillar was set up in perpetual remembrance of the most dreadful burning of this ancient city, begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the Popish faction in the beginning of September, in the year of our Lord 1666, in order to the carrying on their horrid plot for extirpating the Protestant religion and old English liberty, and introducing Popery and slavery." This monstrous statement was removed under James II., but put up again under William III., and remained till 1831. Well might Pope write (*Epistle* iii. 339):

Where London's column, pointing at the skies,
Like a tall bully, lifts its head, and lies.

But, even if there had been no genuine, and no invented atrocities, statesmen were confronted with the fact that Romanism is a great deal more than a form of religion. It is a highly organized system of vast reach and immense power, cutting across all national boundaries and national aspirations. It is antagonistic to all patriotism that is not subservient to the interests of the See of Rome. Through its hierarchy, which is everywhere and under strict discipline, it has almost absolute control over large masses of the population; and it uses this influence not only for religious, but for political purposes. In matters that are purely

¹ "It might be truly asserted, that such old wives' fables as the burning of London by the Roman Catholics have produced more effect against them than even the noble martyrdom of Ridley or the unanswerable arguments of Chillingworth."—(Lord Mahon, *History of England*, i. p. 17.)

secular, it can work in steady opposition to the Government of the country, and can thus become a grave political peril. At a period when Rome's influence was often so baleful, we cannot be surprised that statesmen, who knew better and wished to be tolerant, nevertheless yielded to popular clamour and supported the policy of persecution.

William III. would gladly have repealed the penal laws against Papists which had come down to him from the reign of Elizabeth. But public opinion was too strong for him, and he had to make them still worse. It is sad that anything could have induced him to give the royal assent to the iniquitous Act of 1702, the aim of which was to deprive Roman Catholic proprietors of their estates. Thanks to the justice of English judges, who pressed every difficulty against the working of the Act, it became inoperative; and an attempt in 1705 to make it effective was defeated by 119 to 43 votes, showing that Parliament was ashamed of its work. And the previous Acts against Romanists were often left in oblivion. But they were always there, and at any crisis might be enforced. Romanists were always at the mercy of fanatics. The same was the case in Ireland. In practice, the Irish Roman Catholics had been gently treated, especially before the Revolution; but there, as in England, no *legal* toleration was possible. It would have been hopeless to try to get the persecuting laws repealed; and under the Hanoverian Kings these laws were worked with savage rigour in Ireland, and there it was a minority which oppressed a large majority. "The immense majority were excluded, in their own country, from almost every profession, and from every Government office, and they were placed under conditions that made the growth of industrial virtues and the formation of an enterprising and aspiring character wholly impossible. They were excluded from a great part

of the benefit of the taxes they paid" (Lecky, *History of the Eighteenth Century*, i. p. 286: compare Boswell's *Johnson*, ch. xviii.; Hallam, *History of England*, iii. pp. 401 ff.; Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees*, p. 24).

These penal laws against Papists were mostly "the ferocious Acts of Anne," as Burke says, being passed in 1703, 1704, and 1709. But, in practice, Romanists found a good deal of toleration in England, even under the Hanoverian kings, at any rate until the rebellion in 1745. Defoe in his *Tour through Great Britain* (1724-6) mentions that Durham was "full of Roman Catholics, who live peaceably and disturb nobody and nobody them, for we, being there on a holiday, saw them going publicly to Mass as the Dissenters did on other days to their meeting-houses." Pilgrimages sometimes were made quite openly, e.g. to St Winifred's Well in Wales, where most inns had chapels for the use of the pilgrims.

Opposition to Romanism was the one thing which kindled in the phlegmatic disposition of William III. a great enthusiasm.¹ It was for this that he indefatigably built up the Grand Alliance against France, that intolerant Papal power, which was persecuting Protestants and menacing Europe. It was for this that he valued his position as King of England, and it is in this that his chief greatness consists, although his subjects did not appreciate it at the time. But, when Marlborough continued his work, the value of it was seen. The Grand Alliance had survived its author, and it was a religious war that Marlborough was conducting in the Low Countries. His

¹ In his address to his last Parliament, 30th December 1701, he implored them to "lay aside all parties and divisions. Let there be no other distinction heard among us for the future, but of those who are for the Protestant religion and the present establishment, and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French government" (Calamy, *Own Life*, i. p. 439). See his character sketched, in contrast to Louis XIV., in *The Spectator*, No. 516, 22nd October 1712.

great victories were a sort of crusade against Rome and Roman persecution of Protestants.

This intense prejudice against Romanists pervaded all classes,—High Churchmen and Latitudinarians, Dissenters of all kinds, Socinians, Deists, infidels, Whigs, and Tories. Not even among the Nonjurors or other Protestant Jacobites were there as yet any who were disposed to show any inclination towards Rome. And not very many individual Romanists were generally esteemed in spite of their religion; among the exceptions were a few literary leaders in England and in France,—Pope, Bossuet, Fénelon, and Pascal.

Another important event at the turn of the century was the meeting of Convocation. For ten or eleven years it had been silenced, largely owing to Tillotson's disgust at its rejection of all the proposals made by the Commission which had revised the Prayer Book with a view to conciliating Dissenters. The Tory Government which came into power in 1700 refused to accept office, unless Convocation was allowed to meet and transact business.¹ It met for business 10th February 1701, and Hooper, Dean of Canterbury, was elected Prolocutor.² At once squabbles began between the Upper House, in which Latitudinarian Bishops prevailed, and the Lower House, in which High Churchmen prevailed. These miserable disputes continued for sixteen years, and then Convocation was suppressed.

¹ The *Letter to a Convocation Man* appeared in 1697, Atterbury's *Rights, Powers, and Privileges of an English Convocation* in 1700: both produced a great effect, although the latter was based on a gross blunder.

² He had been chaplain to the Princess Mary at the Hague, and she had promoted him to the Deanery while William, who disliked Hooper, was out of England. He all but persuaded Ken to take the oaths; and, when Kidder, Ken's successor, died in 1703, at Ken's request he became Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Ken thenceforth ceased to sign himself "T. Bath and Wells." Both Burnet and Atterbury say that Hooper was ambitious; but he was always refusing promotion, e.g. the Primacy of Ireland, the Bishopric of London, and the Archbishopric of York.

A few in the Upper House sided at times with the Lower ; as Compton of London, Sprat of Rochester, and Trelawney of Exeter ; and a few in the Lower House sometimes sided with the Upper ; as Beveridge, Bull, Sherlock, and others. But often it was a contest of House against House, especially with regard to privileges and procedure. So many of the books of Convocation had perished in the Fire of London that often there was no documentary evidence to appeal to. It may be that the Lower House was more often in the right than the Upper ; but there can be no comparison as to the temper and dignity of the two bodies. The Upper House behaved so well as to seem to be generally in the right ; the Lower so ill as to seem to be generally in the wrong. The Lower House, when it was not contending for real or imaginary privileges, was apparently much more interested in pronouncing censures upon books than upon effecting genuine reforms. Even where such censures were deserved, the discussion served to advertise the book ; and sometimes the censure was a mere expression of party feeling. Such was the case when the Lower House wished to censure Bishop Burnet's book on the Thirty-nine Articles. Archbishop Tenison told them that they had no right to censure any book without the co-operation of the bishops, and that to condemn a book without specifying the objectionable passages was scandalous.¹ Somewhat later they took to condemning as heterodox opinions which they disliked, but which had never been

¹ Lawyers were consulted as to the powers of Convocation about books. Sir Edward Northey, afterwards Attorney-General, said that to condemn books was a step of great consequence, as it might, by censuring some explanations and allowing others, affect and alter the doctrine of the Church ; without license from the King, Convocation would incur penalties by taking action. The squabbles between the two Houses are given in much detail by J. Toulmin, *Historical View of the State of Protestant Dissenters in England*, ch. ii. See also Tindal's continuation of Rapin, book xxx, ch. ii.

condemned by the Church of England and were plainly allowable.

Early in 1702 another Convocation met, and the Lower House elected Dr Woodward, Dean of Salisbury, as its Prolocutor. This was another hit at Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who at that time was taking proceedings against the Dean. Disputes between the Houses still continued. On the 13th February the Prolocutor died; and on the 8th March the King died; and not much more business was transacted.

William III. never rightly understood the character of the Church of England. He thought that the differences which separated it from the Protestant Churches on the Continent were much the same as the differences which separated those Churches from one another. Hence he underestimated the difficulty of reconciling the English Church and the Dissenters. His efforts to make the Church comprehensive enough to include the Dissenters failed, and we may rejoice that his methods were not adopted. But the Church of England owes him a debt of gratitude for two things. First, when he failed to carry his changes by constitutional means, he did not attempt to force them on the Church in any violent way. Secondly, when he found that he could not accomplish what he desired, he did not refuse to help in any other manner. He did not succeed in carrying comprehension, but he carried a Toleration Act, which, however imperfect, was a great advance on the wretched system of mutual persecution which had prevailed for so many years.¹ His abstention from unconstitutional methods of gaining his ends was all the more creditable to him, because, in spite

¹ He got little credit for this in his own or in the next generation. Dr Johnson "never spoke of King William but in terms of reproach, and, in his opinion of him, seemed to adopt all the prejudices of Jacobite bigotry and rancour."—(*Johnsoniana*, No. 265.)

of the Revolution of 1688, a great deal of power had remained in his hands. He was his own foreign minister, and he took the command in the field. The sovereigns who followed him were less able and less versatile, and they were served by ministers more capable than themselves. Then the theory of ministerial responsibility quickly became a reality.

During the reign of Anne the English Church still stood high in the affections of the nation. Perhaps the moment when it stood highest was at the time of the trial of the Seven Bishops, who had gone to prison rather than betray the liberties of the people by recognizing in James II. a power which the Constitution did not allow him. During the reign of William III. there had perhaps been an abatement of the enthusiasm which was felt for the national Church at the time when he was first invited to come and rescue it from the tyrannies of a Roman Catholic sovereign. But that the Church still had a very strong hold on the nation is shown by the behaviour of the two great political parties, who were anxious to gain the goodwill of Anne as soon as she ascended the throne. Each of them accused the other of being traitors to the English Church. Evidently that was felt to be a crime of the greatest magnitude. The Tories charged the Whigs with aiding Puritanism and Dissent; and the Whigs retorted by accusing the Tories of abetting Romanism. The former charge had more truth in it than the latter. The Whigs sometimes did favour Dissenters; yet often only to the extent of wishing to free them from unjust penal laws. But in one way the Church occupied a better position under Anne than at any previous period; it possessed, along with the affection of the nation, the cordial support of the sovereign. The first Stuarts had supported the Church, but in a fashion which made the

Church unpopular. James II. had made the Church popular again by oppressing it. Under Anne the Church was loved, partly because William, whom the people disliked, had been, as they thought, unfriendly to it, and this increased their devotion to it, partly because the new Queen set an example of devotion to it. But Anne did little or nothing towards allaying the bitterness of spirit which prevailed between Churchmen and members of other religious bodies. English Churchmen seemed often hardly to know which they ought to fear and oppose the most, Roman Catholics or Protestant Dissenters. The antagonism was always keen, and sometimes even ferocious.

But the Coronation Test, as taken by Anne (23rd April) and subsequent sovereigns, was directed wholly against Roman Catholics. It runs thus: "I do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, and that the Sacrifice of the Mass—as they are now used in the Church of Rome—are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasive equivocation or mental reservation whatever, or without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or may be acquitted before God or man, or

absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons or power whatsoever should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning." After Anne had made this declaration, John Sharp, Archbishop of York, blessed her to "have a numerous posterity to rule these kingdoms after you by succession in all ages."¹

Anne was well-meaning, but weak, and the strongest and deepest sentiment of her somewhat dull and torpid nature was attachment to the English Church, the clergy of which rejoiced greatly at her succession. Few of them had a more intense dislike than she had to the toleration which Dissenters had acquired under William.² Neither in the Romanist court of her father, nor in the Latitudinarian atmosphere of the Revolution, had she been shaken in her Anglicanism. She found fault with her chaplain for administering the Holy Communion to her before the clergy.³ Her husband was a Lutheran, holding high office under the Crown, being "generalissimo of Her Majesty's forces," with Marlborough as his subordinate! As such, he was an occasional communicant: but the Queen made him go to the House of Lords and vote against Occasional Conformity, November 1702.⁴ It was

¹ Anne was crowned by Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury, the first Queen regnant who was crowned by the Primate, and with the full Anglican service. Mary I., Elizabeth, and Mary II. were crowned by bishops.

² "The poor Dissenters having lost their firm friend, were presently insulted" (Calamy, *Own Life*, i. p. 460). "In several parts of the country, they talked of pulling down the meeting-houses, as places not fit to be sintered" (*Abridgment of Baxter's Life*, i. p. 620). William's funeral was private and "scarce decent" (Burnet). Anne's coronation, ten days later, was with great pomp and splendour.

³ Swift expresses the greatest admiration for her in *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*. In 1702 she visited Oxford, where "she was very merry and eat most heartily," but showed little interest in the place (Hearne, 6th September 1721).

⁴ "My heart is vid you," he cried out to the other side, as he gave his vote against them.

in 1702 that Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, begun in 1641, began to be published, twenty-eight years after the author's death. It had a preface telling the Queen that the Church was the great support of the monarchy, and that to injure the Church was next door to treason. This was quite in accordance with the Queen's own mind. She revived once more the royal custom of touching for 'King's Evil,' which William had refused to practise, and which George I. again let drop. Among the first who were brought to her to be cured of scrofula, after she had (March 1712) announced her intention of touching publicly, was Samuel Johnson, then two and a half years old.

Immediately after her coronation, Anne, on her own responsibility, and without waiting for either Lords or Commons, declared war against the persecuting Government in France. She held the declaration of war to be part of the royal prerogative, a view of the question which found much favour among High Churchmen and Tories, who had a large majority in the Commons. War with France was not so popular with them; it was war against a power which maintained the doctrine of divine right. For that very reason it was popular with the Whigs, who in this had the support of the French refugees, a constantly increasing body of bitter antagonists to the French Government.

It is now that the terms "High Church" and "Low Church" come into common use. Good men on both sides, Frampton and Kettlewell, Burnet and Hough, lamented the employment of them; yet, if they had not been used, other terms would have been invented. But we must not suppose that "High" and "Low" represented the same ideas as they do now. The High Churchmanship of that time was mainly political; it was Tory

Protestantism, opposed to Romanism, as being a dangerous form, and to Dissent, as being a vulgar form, of refusal to conform to the Established Church. It had, to a large extent, lost that veneration for antiquity and for patristic authority, which is so prevalent among the Caroline divines and which the modern High Churchman has endeavoured to restore.

It is now also that the parallel, and to a large extent equivalent terms "Tories" and "Whigs" come to represent compact and definitely organized parties in systematic opposition.¹ The Whigs, strongest in the large towns, were for religious toleration and the right of the people to elect and control the King. The Tories, strongest in the country, were for the exclusive privileges of the English Church and for divine right. The nation as a whole, had more sympathy with the Tories than with the Whigs. It was quite determined as to two points: (1) to defend the Established Church, and (2) to exclude any Roman Catholic from the throne. The Tories were delighted at having once more a sovereign of the House of Stuart, and their delight exhibited itself in a not very creditable outburst of feeling against Presbyterians. The reign of "the Dutch saints" was now over. For fourteen years the Church had suffered from them, and oaths which were hard to reconcile with earlier obligations had been wrung from perplexed consciences. Now that the true sons of the Church had the upper hand, they must render a return to the recent intolerable state of things impossible: there must be no more Occasional Conformity. The Toleration Act had freed Dissenters from penalties; but it had not freed them from the necessity of conforming to the Anglican Liturgy, if they wished to hold office. For

¹ Lady Newdigate-Newdegate, *Cavalier and Puritan in the Days of the Stuarts*, pp. 78, 79.

this it sufficed to receive the Holy Communion occasionally at Church, while regularly attending a Dissenting chapel. This the Tory majority in the Commons determined to abolish: Occasional Conformity was no longer to suffice. Government must be in the hands of those who were *bonâ-fide* members of the Church. In short, High Anglicans, who had put down Romanists with the help of the Presbyterians, now tried to put down the Presbyterians, that they might have Church and State entirely to themselves. But their Bill to abolish Occasional Conformity made no progress at first. It was thrown out in the Lords, both in 1702 and 1703; and in 1703 the majority in the Commons diminished, while that in the Lords increased. The truth was that, in spite of the change to a High Church sovereign, the Low Church were still the stronger party, and the High were very angry. Swift wrote to Stella in 1703: "The very ladies are split asunder into High and Low, and out of zeal for religion have hardly time to say their prayers." The mad cry of "the Church in danger" was forthwith raised by the High.

It was in December 1702, when the question of Occasional Conformity was raging, that Daniel Defoe published *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*. Pretending to be a 'Highflier,' i.e. the most violent High Churchman, he suggested that Dissenters should be exterminated.¹ The ruse deceived some of the genuine Highfliers, who applauded the outrageous suggestion. But he was prosecuted for libelling the Church, and sentenced, July 1703, to a fine, three days' pillory, and imprisonment. His *True-born Englishman* in 1701 had sold by thousands

¹ "If one severe Law were made, and punctually executed, that *Whoever was found at a Conventicle should be banished, and the Preacher be hanged*, we should soon see an end of the tale!"

and made him very popular, and in the pillory the mob protected and fêted him. He wrote a *Hymn to the Pillory*, which was also very successful. It ends with some fine lines.

And thus he's an example made,
To make men of their honesty afraid ;
That for the time to come they may
More willingly their friends betray.
Tell them the men that placed him here
Are scandals to the times ;
Are at a loss to find his guilt,
And can't commit his crimes.

If we could accept as history his account of the great storm, 27th November 1703, he must have been free at that time;¹ but it is more probable that he was not released from Newgate till August 1704. It was Harley who procured his release; and his intimacy and co-operation with Harley began then. Defoe collected information, which Harley paid for. Defoe was able to declare that he received no pension, and that he wrote in the *Review*, which he had started in Newgate, "without the least direction." We may believe that his support and praise were conscientiously given; but it is perhaps true that he abstained from censuring what he disapproved, when censure might have involved loss of lucrative employment. As the titles of some of his numerous tracts show, he, like Harley, worked for moderation in religion: *Dissenters Misrepresented and Represented*, 1704; *Persecution Anatomised*, 1705; *Party Tyranny*, 1705, 1706; *Dissenters in England Vindicated*, 1707; *Essay on the History of Parties and Persecution in Great Britain*, 1711; etc.

This note is struck at the very beginning of his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, 1715: "It is, and ever was, my opinion that Moderation is the only virtue by which peace

¹ Roscoe, *Robert Harley*, p. 48 note.

and tranquillity of this nation can be preserved." To both him and Harley, intolerance, whether religious or political, was hateful. This alliance between the minister and the writer lasted from 1703 to 1714, and is a remarkable fact in the history of journalism. But the vigorous personality of the writer is even more remarkable than the generous patronage of the minister.¹

Neither Harley nor Godolphin had any sympathy with the political or religious fanaticism of their followers. Both knew the weaknesses of the men with whom they had to deal, and were tactful in dealing with them. Harley's career was more chequered; but Godolphin was in office with Marlborough, 1702 to 1710, one of the most glorious periods in English History: even the Church historian must glance at the main facts. Blenheim, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, and Saragossa; the French expelled from Germany and Flanders; the brilliant successes of Peterborough in Spain; the capture of Gibraltar by Rooke (July 1704), of Minorca by James Stanhope (29th September 1708); the defeat of the attempt by France and Spain to recapture Gibraltar; the union with Scotland; and Byng's defeat of the French attempt to invade Scotland.

It is interesting to notice how some of the chief combatants in the great war were placed at a serious disadvantage owing to their own misdoings in the matter of religious persecution. The bitter persecution of the Camisards caused a rising of his own subjects against the King of France. Massue de Ruvigny, a French Protestant, whom William had made Earl of Galway, entered the English service as a major-general. In June 1704, he succeeded the Duke of Schonberg as commander of the

¹ The *Review* lived for ten years, a long life for a periodical in that age, and expired in June 1713. *Robinson Crusoe* appeared in 1719: it is for the sake of that one book that all Defoe's shiftiness is forgotten or forgiven.

English forces in Portugal, and for years did splendid service. Jean Cavalier also, the able leader of the Camisards, after gaining respectable terms for the oppressed Protestants from Marshal Villars, took service under the English flag, fought bravely in Spain, and was made an English general. In a similar way the German Emperor was weakened by the persecution of his Protestant subjects; while the English Government suffered from the Jacobite sympathies of persecuted Roman Catholics in Ireland, and from a similar alienation of feeling in the persecuted Presbyterians of Scotland.

Sharp, Archbishop of York, 1691-1714, was Queen Anne's adviser in religious matters, and became very influential. Lord Nottingham consulted him about most Church appointments, and henceforth few Latitudinarian clergy received promotion. It was to Sharp that Beveridge, Potter, Prideaux, and Bull owed their promotion; and Swift suspected that Sharp helped to prevent his being made Bishop of Hereford. It was not unlikely that Sharp thought that the writer of *The Tale of a Tub* was not the best person for a bishopric. After Queen Mary's death, William III. had appointed a Commission of six Bishops to advise him, respecting ecclesiastical appointments. On the first Commission were Tenison, Sharp, Burnet, Patrick, Stillingsfleet, and Lloyd of Lichfield and Coventry. At Anne's accession the Tories got the Commission abolished, because it was too Whig in composition; but it might have been made very useful to the Church.

Sharp of course was in favour of restoring annates or firstfruits to the Church for the augmentation of poor livings, and thus founding Queen Anne's Bounty. Burnet tells us that under Charles II., this money "went chiefly among his women and his natural children." Burnet regarded himself as the originator of the scheme carried out

by Queen Anne. "We having among us some thousands of cures that have not of certain provision twenty pounds a year; and some thousands that have not fifty." Had Burnet's claim to be the originator been unfounded, some of his many enemies would have challenged it. He says that he urged William III. to do it, "as a proper expression both of his thankfulness to Almighty God, and of his care of the Church. . . . It might at least have put a stop to a groundless clamour raised against him, that he was an enemy to the clergy, which began to have an ill effect on all his affairs." Both the King and his ministers approved, but the Earl of Sunderland contrived to block the way until the accession of Anne. In November 1703, the proposal, strongly recommended by the Queen, came before the Commons, and it readily passed both Houses. The preamble stated that "divers mean and stipendiary preachers are in many places entertained to serve the cures and officials there, who depending for their necessary maintenance on the goodwill and liking of their hearers, have been and are thereby under temptation of too much complying and suiting their doctrine and teaching to the humours rather than the good of their hearers, which hath been a great occasion of faction and schism and contempt of the ministry." A clause was added to the Bill, repealing so much of the Statute of Mortmain as to enable people to bequeath money by deed or will to the augmentation of livings.

During the reign of William III., there was no more influential person in the English Church than Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury. This was William's first episcopal appointment, and it was very unpopular. Burnet was greatly vilified in his own age, and receives a good deal of abuse still. Hearn's comment (*Remarks and Collections*, 24th March 1715) will serve as a specimen:

"On the 17th Instant, being the first Day of the first Parliament of K. George, died that Great villain Dr Gilbert Burnet, Bp. of Sarum, without retracting any of his Errors, or begging Pardon of God and Good Men for the Mischiefs he had done." (See also the verses inserted 11th April, in which Burnet is charged with being a Socinian and a Dissenter at heart, and with having "betrayed the Church of God for Mammon.") In our own day we have been told that "Burnet was no Churchman at all, or at best an ultra-Protestant Gallo, who cared little whether he was a Churchman or Dissenter" (A. H. Hore). Yet the same writer admits that, "whatever Burnet's faults were, he was never afraid to do and to say what he thought right." He was not only a courageous, but an honest man; and, much as he enjoyed meddling in politics, he was always a Churchman first and a politician afterwards. In politics he made mistakes; but they were only mistakes, and not acts of treachery. He may be called a trimmer, for he was willing to work with whichever side would do what he thought ought to be done for the Church. He had been brought up in Presbyterianism of a liberal kind; but it was far too narrow for him. He learnt a better kind of piety from Archbishop Leighton, with whom he was intimate for years. From Hooker he got a firm grasp of the value of episcopacy, and of its strong justification both in history and in reason. From the works of the Cambridge Platonists, and especially of Henry More, he gained broad ideas of toleration and of the importance of distinguishing the essentials from the accidents of religion. As Benjamin Whichcote had taught, we must draw our minds from "forms of words" to the "inwards of things" and the "reason of them." "Vitals in religion are few." Burnet was not an indifferentist, holding that it did not

matter what you believed, or how you worshipped. But he did maintain the right of each man to inquire and use his reason in the search for truth; and it was the business of the Church to guide and educate, not to forbid or impede, religious thought. All this harmonized well with the influence of Leighton, who "raised me to a just sense of the great end of Religion as a divine life in the soul, that carries a man far above forms." Residence and study at intellectual centres.—Cambridge, Oxford, London, Amsterdam,—where he met leading men of various communions, increased his enthusiasm for broad and tolerant views, although he was shocked at the bigotry and unintellectual life of many people at the Universities. Conferences with Scotch Presbyterians showed him how hopeless that field was: they were as furious in denying toleration to others, as they were emphatic in claiming it for themselves. The first volume of his *History of the Reformation* appeared in 1679, the second in 1681, along with Stillingfleet's *Unreasonableness of Separation*, Bishop Barlow's *Brutum Fulmen*, and Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. During the reign of James II. he was at Rome, at Geneva, and at the Hague, where he did England and its future sovereigns one immense service. He induced Mary to promise William of Orange that, if she ever became Queen of England, she would always be guided by him. William afterwards said that a matter which had tormented him during nine years of married life had been settled by Burnet in an hour. James II. regarded him as a traitor, and set a price of £3000 on his head.

He became the chief adviser of William and Mary in religious matters; and if he could have had his way there would have been no Nonjurors. Granted that these men were unreasonable in refusing to take the oaths; why

should they be required to do so? Men who were so scrupulous as to what looked like perjury were not likely to become conspirators and traitors. But if he failed there, he was successful with the Toleration Act, which was a measure quite after his heart. Tests he could not see his way to abolishing; they were a necessary protection against Romanism; and, as Swift said of him, he was always seeing a Papist under every bush, and could smell Popery at five hundred miles distance. But he was glad that Dissenters should be allowed to circumvent the Test Act by the device of Occasional Conformity. Yet his horror of Roman Catholicism did not prevent him from seeing the strong point of the Roman Church,—the splendid efficiency of its clergy. In this, he felt that the English Church was at a sad disadvantage. The primitive truth recovered at the Reformation was not bearing its proper fruit. It was so seldom accompanied by primitive love and zeal. There were not many clergy leading immoral lives; but there were very many whose lives were grievously unspiritual. They were lethargic and neglectful, which to a man of Burnet's amazing industry seemed terrible; or, if they had any vigour, it was chiefly exhibited in denouncing Latitudinarians and Dissenters. Burnet had little experience of the best kind of Churchmen, such as Ken, Kettlewell, and Nelson, or Beveridge, Bull, and Wilson of Sodor and Man. He sets forth the needs of the Church in his *Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (1692), and he tried to begin a remedy in his own diocese by taking great care about candidates for Holy Orders. But his zeal was not appreciated by the clergy. They were mostly Tory and High Church, while he was Whig and Latitudinarian; and they were much more exasperated by his faults, which were on the surface,—self-complacency, fussiness, and occasional brusqueness,—than they were conciliated by his deepseated

goodness of heart. What Swift, who was greatly prejudiced against him, said of him in 1712 was true: "he has the misfortune to be hated by every one who either wears the habit, or values the profession, of a clergyman"; and "the bulk of the kingdom, both clergy and laity, happen to differ extremely from this prelate in many principles both of politicks and religion" (*A Preface to the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction*). But, even in his bitter *Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History*, Swift admits that "after all, he was a man of generosity and good-nature, and very communicative." A modern writer sums him up with much insight and justice. "We may criticize him for a want of faith in the power of religion to hold its own without extraneous supports, and for too much faith in the power of conventional beliefs. We may grant that he would have been more permanently useful, if he had been less politically minded. The religious life has heights and depths which lay beyond his purview. When all these reservations have been made, Burnet remains historically an important, morally an attractive, figure. The English Church has produced some minds of a finer texture, more audacious, more profound, but none more typical or more devoted to her service" (H. W. C. Davis in *Typical English Churchmen*, p. 191, S.P.C.K., 1902). "More than any one man besides, he was influential in averting a yet worse schism than that of the Nonjurors by keeping loyal to the unity of the English Church that great Whig party whom the Sacheverells of their day would have hopelessly estranged" (C. J. Abbey, *The English Church and its Bishops, 1700-1800*, i. p. 113). We have seen that he tried hard to avert the schism of the Nonjurors. When, in spite of his efforts, it took place, he mitigated its effects in his own diocese by allowing the outgoing clergy to nominate their successors; and, in one case, he paid to the ejected incumbent the

amount of the income which he had lost, out of his own pocket, for the remainder of his life.

It is because Burnet was so influential in his own age, and so characteristic of the best kind of Latitudinarian bishop under William and Anne, that it is necessary to have clear and just ideas respecting him, in order to understand the first years of the eighteenth century. And as, after his death, Latitudinarian Bishops largely predominated in the English Church, it is also necessary to know something of the party which commonly went by that name. With some persons, to classify a man as Latitudinarian is at once to condemn him. But there were good as well as bad Latitudinarians, and to their influence and teaching the Church of England owes elements which it could ill spare, and which are of special value at times of excited controversy about doctrine or practice. The truth is that the term "Latitudinarian" has been, almost from the time of its first appearance, a word of somewhat shifting meaning, and has been applied to persons who differed widely as regards their religious views. Sometimes the word has reference chiefly to doctrine, and indicates those who would minimize the fundamentals of Christian belief, so as to have as many beliefs as possible open questions. Sometimes it has reference chiefly to discipline, and indicates those who would make terms of subscription easy, and also have both ritual and ceremonial as elastic and optional as possible, so as to make public worship free from offence to the scrupulous. Once more, the term "Latitudinarian" is sometimes used to imply great slovenliness, or even dishonesty, in thought and practice; as in the case of those who refuse to face frankly in their own minds, or at any rate avoid putting into clear words, their own religious convictions; or of those who have promised to observe certain rules (as

those of the Prayer Book), and yet constantly disregard, not merely some unimportant detail, but a considerable number of regulations, which are of the essence of the system. This last, however, is not a satisfactory use of the word. In short, the term may be used, in what many people would regard as a good sense, of those who desire, for themselves and others, all the freedom that is consistent with that definiteness of belief and organization, without which a Church cannot long escape decay and dissolution: and it may also be used, in what everybody would admit to be a bad sense, of those who wish to shirk all definiteness, in order that they may have the benefit of belonging to, and perhaps being paid ministers in, a particular Church, without being in any way bound as regards belief, or teaching, or practice.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the term "Latitude-men" seems to have been used of those Puritan clergy of the English Church who accepted either Independency or Presbyterianism under the Long Parliament. Before the last quarter of the century we have "Latitudinarian" used, and explained in an uncomplimentary way as "a gentleman with a wide swallow." But, whatever may be the precise history of the word, the thing itself begins in England with such thinkers as Hales and Chillingworth, both of whom contended strongly for the claims of reason in the interpretation of Scripture and the criticism of doctrine; and for that, and nothing else, were accused of being Socinians. In his tract on Schism Hales says: "It hath been the common disease of Christians from the beginning not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and the Scripture have expressly afforded us; but, out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to discuss things of which we can have no light, neither from

reason nor revelation. . . . Were liturgies and public forms of service so framed as that they admitted not of particular and private fancies, but contained only such things as in which all Churches do agree, schisms on opinion were utterly vanished. . . . If the spiritual guides of the Church would be a little sparing of incumbering churches with superfluities, and not over rigid, either in reviving obsolete customs or imposing new, there were far less danger of schism or superstition." Clarendon says that Hales hated the Roman system, less because it taught what was false, than because it required men to believe this or that on pain of damnation. It is worth noting that the High Churchmen of that age do not seem to have been so very averse to Latitudinarians. Laud was on good terms with them, and Chillingworth was his godson.

The Cambridge Platonists, Henry More, Cudworth, Whichcote, etc., were called Latitudinarians, because of their appeal to reason as against the narrowness of Calvinism. They were attached to the English Church, for which they thought that Presbyterianism "would be a sorry exchange." A Cambridge writer, S. P. (perhaps Simon Patrick), says that "they are so far from being dangerous to the Church that they seem to be the very chariot and horsemen thereof." But the liberal Latitudinarian spirit spread far beyond the very select company of Cambridge Platonists, and did excellent work in freeing the English Church and other bodies from the dreadful bondage of Calvinistic doctrine and discipline.

Between the Platonists of the seventeenth century and the Latitudinarians of the eighteenth comes Tillotson, who to a large extent was the disciple of the former, and perhaps to a still greater extent the teacher of the latter. He died in 1694; but in thought he belonged to the coming age rather than the one in which he lived. He contended

strongly for the reasonableness of Christianity, which was to be accepted because what it required men to believe could be approved by reason. A religion lies under a grave disadvantage which refuses to submit to investigation. In a matter of such importance there must be liberty of inquiry and judgment. Consequently, there must be full allowance made for those who, in a sincere search for truth, fall into error, even about fundamentals. Even those who deny this right of free inquiry and judgment are obliged sometimes to recognize and practise it. When they try to gain a convert they argue with him and submit the case to his reason. And Scripture itself commands us to "prove all things." But he who exercises this right must remember that others possess it also; he must not try to force his conclusions on them. And he must beware of causing scandal by lightly contradicting authority.

In the eighteenth century the Latitudinarians were those who were anxious for a large amount of toleration towards Dissenters, and a large amount of freedom with regard to the use of prescribed forms in public worship. Some were willing to revise the Prayer Book, and to cut out or explain what was disliked by Nonconformists, and some would gladly have abolished the public use of the Athanasian Creed. It is a mistake to suppose that it was these men who produced the apathy and indifference which were so prevalent among the clergy during the eighteenth century; and it is an unfair use of language to call those apathetic and indifferent ministers Latitudinarians. The apathy and indifference were caused by the expulsion of the most earnest and conscientious workers, on the one side and on the other, from the English Church; the Nonconformists in 1662, and the Nonjurors in 1690.

Among those who remained, and swallowed the Act of Uniformity under Charles II., and the oaths under William and Mary, there must have been some, and perhaps there were very many, who strained their consciences severely in so doing. Such men do not make the best of ministers. One may quote once more the words which South attributes to "a judicious Prelate": "Of all sorts of enemies which the Church had, there was none so deadly, so pernicious, and likely to prove so fatal to it, as the conforming Puritan. He is one who lives by the Altar and turns his back on it; one who catches at the preferment of the Church, but hates the discipline and order of it; one who practises conformity as Papists take oaths and tests, that is, with an inward abhorrence of what he does for the present, and a resolution to act quite contrary when occasion serves."¹ Some of these conforming Puritans mangled the service considerably and omitted the use of the surplice. Those who unwillingly swore allegiance to William and Mary, rather than resign their livings, were under no temptation to tamper with the Prayer Book, except in the places in which the sovereign and the royal family were prayed for. Here the Jacobites among the congregation sometimes protested by standing up, or shutting their Prayer Books with a bang, or making a great rustling with the leaves, and other rather undignified devices; and a Jacobite incumbent might show his sympathy by mumbling, so that no one could hear for whom he was praying.

¹ Charles Leslie, author of the *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*, wrote in the *Rehearsal* that a Low or Latitudinarian Churchman was "an Anythingarian, who seems to be confined to any one sect or religion"; he "made a shift to keep in the communion and bosom of the Church, because it was warm; to enjoy her dignities and preferments and maintain a sort of outward conformity; but had no inward liking for her constitution; was ready upon every occasion to do the Church a mischief."

The union of the Kingdom of Scotland with the Kingdom of England in 1707 is an event of political rather than of ecclesiastical importance. But the English Government promised that the Kirk should not be changed, and that the Scottish universities and law-courts should be maintained. In Great Britain, which now became much more than a geographical expression, Presbyterianism was to be as essential in the one part as Episcopacy in the other. This result startled not a few on both sides of the Border. It seemed to involve the Erastian doctrine that the State in all things controls Churches. In 1707, a rumour that the Pretender was about to invade sent stocks down 14 or 15 per cent. Evidently the mercantile classes had no enthusiasm for a Romanist Prince. This was one of the strong strands in the tie between the two nations: both were heartily opposed to Rome, even where a Scot was concerned. Still, this did not silence all objections. It was in 1707 that Anne appointed some High Church bishops, without consulting her ministers. One of these was Offspring Blackhall, Bishop of Exeter, 1707-1716. For a short time he had been a Nonjuror. Soon after his consecration he had to preach before the Queen, and he asserted the duty of non-resistance in its extreme form. The clergy generally became more aggressive in their preaching, and the cry of "the Church in danger" was again raised. The union with Scotland was denounced as recognizing a Presbyterian Establishment and bringing Presbyterians into the English Parliament. Protests were also made against the Act for naturalizing Protestant immigrants, who of course were Presbyterians.¹ It was just while feeling was in this electrical condition that the

¹ See Tindal's continuation of Rapin for the arguments for and against the Act, book xxx. ch. i. The immigrants were to take the oaths to the Government and receive communion in any Protestant Church.

trial of Sacheverell produced the explosion that put an end to the Whig ministry, which was already out of favour, because it prolonged a costly war after Louis had been humbled, and also because it seemed to be unfriendly to the English Church.

On the anniversary of Gunpowder Plot in 1709 Sacheverell preached before the Lord Mayor on "Perils from False Brethren," hinting at Burnet and Hoadly, and more openly at Godolphin, as being false brethren, and insisting on the duty of unlimited passive obedience. This he printed, with a dedication to the Lord Mayor, and 40,000 copies were quickly sold. "Since the foundation of the City of London and the conversion of this island," says Kennett, "there has not been in any age, in any cathedral or parochial church, such a sermon, so insolent, uncharitable, untrue, as this."¹ The Whigs were furious, but instead of treating the sermon with contempt or requesting the Bishop to take notice of it, they paid the preacher the compliment of impeaching him before the most august court in the kingdom, 27th February 1710. Never, since that of the Seven Bishops, had there been such excitement about a trial. Burnet says that "before my own door one with a spade cleft the skull of another," because he would not shout for Sacheverell. Burnet's house was in danger. The mob, with shouts of "High Church and Sacheverell," went and looted Dissenting chapels. Business was almost suspended. At the end of three weeks, Sacheverell was condemned, seven out of twelve bishops voting against him. But the only penalty which was inflicted was suspension for three years. His friends regarded this as

¹ John Byrom writes from Cambridge, 17th December 1709: "I see no cause to commend Dr Sacheverell's zeal, nor to think he does the Church any good by such hot sermons." See also *John Bull in his Senses: being the Second Part of a Law is a Bottomless Pit*, 1712, by John Arbuthnot.

equivalent to an acquittal.¹ A heavy penalty would, however, have made the original mistake of prosecution still greater. As it was, Sacheverell received enthusiastic ovations of the most absurd kind wherever he went during the term of his suspension. He was regarded as one who had suffered in a popular cause. A national hero, who had saved England from ruinous defeat, could hardly have received more general applause.

In the sermon there were some telling passages; the preacher asked whether it was the doctrine of the Church "to assert separation from her communion to be no schism, or that schism is no damnable sin, that occasional conformity is no hypocrisy, but rather for the benefit of the Church, that a Christian may serve God in any way or congregation, as well by extemporary prayers as by a prescribed form of liturgy;—in a word, that the whole body of the worship and discipline of the Church of England is nothing else but priestcraft and Popery in masquerade."

Defoe gives an amusing account of feminine enthusiasm for Sacheverell. "Matters of government and affairs of state are become the province of the ladies. They have hardly leisure to live, little time to eat and sleep, and none at all to say their prayers. Little Miss has Dr S.'s picture put into her prayer-book; and all manner of discourse among the women runs now upon war and government. This new invasion of the politician's province is an eminent demonstration of the sympathetic

¹ A tract was at once published, *Dr Sacheverell's Prayers of Thanksgiving for his great Deliverance out of his Troubles*, 1710. Steele, in his *Letter to Sir Miles Wharton*: "When the minds of men are prejudiced, wonderful effects may be wrought against common sense. One weak step in trying a fool for what he said in the pulpit, with all the pomp that could be used to take down a more dangerous man than ever England yet has seen, cost the most able ministry that England was ever honoured with, its being."

influence of the clergy upon the sex and the near affinity between the gown and the petticoat. . . . As soon as you pinch the parson, he holds out his hands to the ladies for assistance, and they appear as one woman in his defence."¹ *The Spectator* (No. 57, May 1711) has a similar picture, in which Sacheverell is disguised under the name of Titus Oates; see also No. 37. As soon as his suspension was over, he preached on Luke xxiii. 34, and made an indecent comparison between his own sufferings and those of Christ. Swift says in his *Journal to Stella* (2nd April) that Sacheverell told him that a bookseller had given him £100 for the sermon. See also Hearne, 28th April 1713.

But, to the statesman, the serious lesson to be drawn from the whole incident was the extraordinary influence of the Anglican clergy. When fully roused, they could produce an amount of popular feeling, against which politicians struggled in vain. It was mainly owing to their activity that a strong Government, backed by all the financial ability of Godolphin and all the prestige of Marlborough's victories, had gone to pieces. This would have been less surprising, if the age had been specially favourable to clerical ascendancy by being intellectually stagnant. It was the age of Newton, Pope, Swift, Steele, Defoe, Addison, Prior, Bolingbroke, Bentley, Burnet, and Atterbury. Evidently the clergy had a hold on the affections of the people.²

¹ See also Hearne, 19th June 1713.

² As the Dissenting writers, Bennett and Brogue, point out: "The Whigs, before Sacheverell's trial commenced, were sensible they had brought themselves into the most imminent danger. To mitigate the evil, it was resolved to bring forward all the great principles of the Revolution and of liberty, and by contending for these to interest the public in their favour. But it was in vain. A passion for liberty was unable to contend with the passion for the Church"—(*History of Dissenters from 1688 to 1808*, i. p. 251.)

And, had not the average social position of the clergy been very low, their influence would have been still greater. An incumbent got from £20 to £60 a year; a curate £15 to £30; a private chaplain £30 and perquisites. Stackhouse says that a sermon was sometimes paid for with a shilling and a Sunday dinner. Dean Swift says of the ordinary parson: "If he be the son of a farmer it is very sufficient, and his sister may very decently be chamber maid to the squire's wife. His daughters shall go to service, or be sent apprentice to the sempstress in the next town, and his sons are put to honest trades."¹ And there was a scandalous practice, not uncommon, which placed incumbents at the mercy of the patron. In accepting a living they gave the patron bonds of resignation, so that the patron could at any time dismiss them.² Nevertheless, in spite of serious drawbacks, the Church of England in 1710 was still not far from the zenith of its influence. It could decide elections, and its interests were jealously watched in Parliament.³ And it perhaps ought to be counted to its advantage that from 1710 some of the Nonjurors (Dodwell, Nelson, etc.) began to return to the Church,—a moral rather than a numerical gain (Lathbury, *History of the Nonjurors*, ch. vi.).

The marvel was that such doctrines as divine right and non-resistance should rouse popular enthusiasm.⁴ These

¹ See Calamy, *Own Life*, ii. p. 217 and notes; Swift, *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*.

² In 1777 Bishop Porteus carried a Bill through the Lords to prohibit this practice. Lord Loughborough ruled that these bonds of resignation were legal; but in 1783 the House of Lords reversed this decision.

³ In Convocation, which met for business in January 1711, the Lower House showed its temper with regard to Dissent by trying to declare that baptism was invalid, unless administered by one who was episcopally ordained. As Dean Kennett said, we were "in danger of losing Christianity in the name of the Church."

⁴ See *The Spectator*, No. 384, 21st May 1712, where Bishop Fleetwood argues admirably against this folly. He was one of the best Bishops of the century.

and appeals to the memory of Charles I. had immense influence. The sufferings of Charles were compared with those of Christ. "I may be positive," says Bisset, writing during the Sacheverell outburst, "at Westminster Abbey, where I heard one sermon of repentance, faith, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, I heard three of the other; and it is hard to say whether Jesus Christ or King Charles were oftenest mentioned and magnified." Had Anne died during this strange excitement, the Pretender's chances of succeeding would have been considerable, so many of the clergy were Jacobite. As it was, the elections gave the Tories a very decided majority, and the Bill against Occasional Conformity at last passed. The Commons had already passed it three times. The elections of 1710 showed that the nation was with the Commons, and this time the Lords allowed the Bill to pass. It is said that the leading Dissenters were consulted, and that they decided not to raise an outcry, on the understanding that changes in their favour would be made later.¹ A modification was made at once. Although magistrates, aldermen, etc., who were Dissenters could no longer attend the public services of their denominations, yet they could have services in their own houses. For Holy Communion they went as before, to church; but all other worship, so long as they held office, must be either at church or in their homes. But, if ten persons were present at these private

¹ The Dissenting historian, H. S. Skeats, remarks of the *Presbyterians*: "They gravely and earnestly argued that it [Occasional Conformity] should be allowed to continue because it strengthened the Established Church and depressed the Dissenting interest" (*History of the Free Churches*, p. 223). It is difficult to catch this point of view; but the *Presbyterians* regarded themselves as 'moderate' Dissenters, when compared with Baptists, Independents, and Quakers, who were 'high' Dissenters; and most of the secessions from Dissent to the Church were from these 'moderates' (p. 228). The telling argument was: "If you can conform occasionally, why do you not conform altogether? If your conscience will not allow you to conform altogether, why do you conform occasionally?" See Calamy, *Own Life*, ii. p. 245, for other views.

services, over and above the members of the family, then the meeting became "a conventicle," and any official of the Government or of a Corporation who attended a conventicle was thereby disqualified.

The Parliament which was so zealous for the interests of the Church did nothing for the liberty of the Press. Indeed it was always prosecuting some pamphleteer or preacher. There was even talk of reviving the Licensing Act. As a substitute for it a Stamp duty on newspapers and advertisements was imposed in 1712, in order to suppress libels.¹ This cut down the circulation of cheap newspapers; and the policy was carried still further under George I. and II., and again by the Six Acts under George III.

The much discussed Peace of Utrecht interests us inasmuch as the leading diplomatist at Utrecht and the first to sign the treaty (11th April 1713) was John Robinson, Bishop of Bristol (1710) and soon afterwards (1713) of London. In August 1711, he had been made Lord Privy Seal;² the last instance of an ecclesiastic holding high political office in England.³ Being a good linguist, he had been invaluable to Marlborough in conducting negotiations. He translated the English Liturgy into German, and helped Archbishop Sharp in his efforts to get Episcopacy restored in Prussia. Handel was asked by the Queen to compose a *Te Deum* and a *Jubilate* to celebrate the Peace. Many joined heartily in the music, but some Englishmen thought that it had a funereal sound. That was not necessarily a fault, if it was the funeral of some evil

¹ "The Present Parliament are styl'd by some *Parliamentum inductum*, because of a very grievous and heavy tax they are laying upon Paper, on Purpose to crush learning and depress poor Scholars" (Hearne, 2nd April 1712).

² Hearne, 31st August 1711, 14th August 1713.

³ Calamy quotes a spiteful criticism of him (*Owen Life*, ii. p. 270). His work at Utrecht is given in detail in Tindal's continuation of Rapin, book xxx. ch. v.

thing (such as the War of the Spanish Succession) that was being conducted.

The Queen's health was failing, but she recovered sufficiently to open Parliament in person, 16th February 1714. This session marks the high tide of reactionary feeling against Dissent. The Schism Bill, a return to the policy of the Clarendon Code, was introduced 12th May. It provided that "no person in Great Britain should keep any public or private school, or act as tutor, that has not first subscribed the Declaration to conform to the Church of England and obtained a licence from the diocesan," on pain of imprisonment without bail. The Commons passed this by a large majority. In the Upper House Archbishop Wake opposed it, and Lord Cowper pointed out that the Bill "tended to produce ignorance and its inseparable attendants, superstition and irreligion." In some places Dissenting schools were the best or the only schools. The Bill passed, and received the royal assent,—the last Act of the kind that has disgraced the English Statute Book. The infamous law was to come into force on the first of August, and on that Sunday, at 7 a.m., the Queen died.¹ It was never put into operation, and was repealed in 1719. Legislators were ashamed of their law; but Wake, who had opposed the Act, opposed its repeal.

By most of the clergy the death of Queen Anne was regarded as a heavy blow. She had been the friend of the Church, not from mere policy, but because, like Charles I., she was loyally devoted to it. That mere policy was not her guiding principle is seen from the fact that she had insisted upon the promotion of good Churchmen when

¹ The coincidence was noted at the time and long remembered. Preaching at Salter's Hall as late as 1758, Dr Benson was jubilant over the fact that "on the very day that the Schism Act was to take place, God once more appeared for us in the most distinguishing manner; took away the life of that Princess," etc.

statecraft might have suggested other selections. Throughout her reign she had regarded the cause of the English Church as identical with that of the English Crown. And in this there was no one to replace her. The Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg was a German Protestant of uncertain colour. The Pretender was a staunch Romanist, whom neither Protestant Jacobites nor Popish schemers could induce to profess Anglicanism for the sake of a Crown. Most Anglican clergy would probably have preferred the Romanist, because of his supposed hereditary right; but they saw that the nation had decided for the Hanoverian Protestant, and they resigned themselves to the prospect of a reign of laxity and lukewarmness. The temper of the commercial world was shown by the fact that a rumour that the Queen was recovering sent stocks down 3 or 4 per cent. When it was announced that she was dead, they rose again. The temper of the Nonconformists was similar. On the Sunday morning Burnet sent word to Thomas Bradbury, during the service in his congregational chapel, that the Queen was dead. After his sermon he sat down. He then rose and said: "My friends, I have to call on you to thank God for a great deliverance. The Queen is dead. Long live King George I." That was the first proclamation of the House of Hanover.¹

The tranquil way in which the accession of George I. was received shows that the Jacobites were not very strong. Lord Berkeley wrote to Lord Strafford, 16th March 1714: "There is such an aversion to Popery that I believe in my conscience the generality thinks of nothing after the Queen but the House of Hanover." A few months later Iberville wrote to Torcy: "There is not one Tory fool-hardy enough

¹ For an interesting account of some of the leading Dissenters at this time see Dr Stoughton's *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, ch. vii.

to pledge himself to acknowledge King James, unless he will become a member of the Church of England."¹

It is quite true that the panic cry of "the Church in danger" was once more started by Atterbury and others, and led to riots in 1714 and the rising in 1715; but it quite failed. The rising was quickly put down.² After it was suppressed, George I. said in his speech to Parliament: "The endeavour to persuade my people that the Church of England is in danger under my government has been the main artifice in carrying on the design. This insinuation, after the solemn assurance I have given, and my having laid hold of all opportunities to do everything that may tend to the advantage of the Church of England, is both unjust and ungrateful."

It was a strange result of the Great Rebellion, the aim of which was to recover national freedom, that for nearly a century (1660-1760) the nation was under foreign rulers. Charles II. and James II., though born in London, were sons of a French mother, were to a large extent educated on the Continent, had French sympathies, and adopted a French policy. They were followed by a Dutchman, who spoke the English language as a foreigner; and then, after the dozen years of Anne, two German sovereigns followed, one of whom could not speak English at all. Unlike William III., George I. made no effort to master even the

¹ There were considerable Jacobite riots at Oxford: *Studies in Oxford History* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), pp. 146 ff. Charles Leslie tried in vain to convert the Pretender to the English Church. See also Hearne, 5th August 1714.

² Robert Patten, curate of Allendale, took part in the rising and became chaplain to the rebels. He was captured at Preston and turned King's evidence; and in gratitude for being spared wrote his *History of the Rebellion in 1715*. In it he says; "Nothing contributed more to raise the People of this Nation to a Spirit of Rebellion, than the licentious Freedom of some in their public Discourses, and others in their Addresses, to cry up the old Doctrines of Passive Obedience, and to give Hints and Arguments to prove Hereditary Right" (Preface, 4th ed., 1745). He is 'Creeping Bob' in Besant's *Dorothy Forster*.

radiments of the English language,¹ and when he opened Parliament in person, his speech was read for him by the Lord Chancellor. In Germany he had been a firm supporter of the *Corpus Evangelicorum*; but in England he made little attempt to understand the character or the peculiar position of the English Church. He was eager to conform, and went to the services in the royal chapel very punctiliously. But he talked audibly during the sermons, of which he could not understand a word; and the young ladies about the Princess of Wales behaved so badly that Burnet had to complain to the Princess.² By joining in communion with the Church of England the King did all that the law required. But some Churchmen wondered whether that was sufficient safeguard in the case of a prince, who, until he was fifty-four, had belonged to a Church which had neither Bishops nor a liturgy; and whether it was safe to make a Protestant of this kind "in all causes ecclesiastical supreme." Such a king was likely to be friendly to Protestant bodies outside the Established Church. When the Dissenting ministers went, 24th September 1714, with an address to the new king, Bolingbroke was amused at their all wearing black gowns. "Pray, sir," he said to one of them, "is this a funeral?" "Yes," replied Bradbury; "it is the funeral of the Schism Act, and the resurrection of liberty."

And liberty in full was secured to the Anglican clergy. Convocation was summoned to transact business, 5th May 1715, and in July it voted an address to the King thanking him for what he had done "in favour of our Established

¹ Dr Johnson said of him: "George I. knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing" (Boswell, 1775).

² For pictures of the bad behaviour in church that was common in those days see *The Spectator*, Nos. 53, 380, 460, 503, 630; *The Guardian*, No. 65. Swift, in his satirical *Argument against abolishing Christianity*, points out how useful churches are for "rendezvouses of gallantry" and "meetings for business."

Church," and promising to take all opportunities "to instil into those who are under our care the same grateful sense that we ourselves have of your Majesty's goodness." Dawes, Archbishop of York, had written to the Princess Sophia in a similar strain, 4th May 1714.¹

The beginning of the reign was marked by a revival of the Trinitarian controversy, the details of which must be sought elsewhere. The result was a considerable spread of Unitarianism, especially among the Presbyterians. "In less than half a century the doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England."² The renewal of the discussion gave the Government an excuse for reissuing (December 1714) the Directions to the Archbishops and Bishops, which had been given by William III. in the Sherlock and South phase of the controversy. A clause was added respecting political sermons. "Whereas unusual liberties have been taken by several of the said clergy in intermeddling with the affairs of State and Government and Constitution of the realm, which may be of very dangerous consequence, if not timely prevented, (we therefore direct) that none of the clergy, in their sermons or lectures, presume to intermeddle in any affairs of State, or Government, or the Constitution of the realm, save only on such special feasts and fasts as are or shall be appointed by public authority, and then no further than the occasion of such days shall strictly require."

By giving every important post to Whigs, George I. turned many Tories into Jacobites; and in 1715 a futile Jacobite rising took place. But in that year death deprived the Whigs of many important supporters. Bishop Burnet died on the 7th March; Wharton, 12th April;

¹ Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd series, iv. p. 271.

² Skeats, p. 311.

Halifax, 19th May; Archbishop Tenison, 14th December. The Primate's last public act was the issue of a Declaration testifying the Bishops' abhorrence of the Jacobite rebellion. It was signed by thirteen of them, and it pointed out how dangerous to the Church of England would be the accession of a Popish prince. In this nearly all Tories agreed, and it utterly disconcerted Bolingbroke. A man of no religious convictions himself, and with a repugnance to definite beliefs, he could not understand how anyone could refuse to overthrow the Whigs, simply because James Edward refused to join the Church of England. The same year Lord Chancellor Somers and Marlborough were stricken with paralysis, the one dying 1716, and the other lingering on in a miserable condition until 1722. On the other hand, the Jacobites lost their most powerful friend by the death of Louis XIV., 1st September 1715. This spoilt one of the cryptic Jacobite toasts. They had drunk to "£3, 14s. 5d." (James III., Louis XIV., and Philip V.); but they could still drink to "Kit" (*King James Third*), and to "Job" (*James, Ormond, Bolingbroke*).

In Parliament the Jacobites became more jealous of the royal power than the Whigs themselves. As they could not have their own King, they would limit the power of the King whom they had been obliged to accept. Thus principles seemed almost to change sides. Tories, hesitating between the rival claims of hereditary right and Protestantism, were no longer the great upholders of their King. In some sense they could still preach the duty of loyalty; but it was loyalty to an office rather than to a person. The race of Cavaliers was extinct.¹

In reply to the joint-address of the two Houses of Convocation in April 1715, the King had thanked them

¹ Carlyle, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

for their "very dutiful and loyal" words, and had added: "You may be assured I will always support and defend the Church of England as by law established, and make it my particular care to encourage the Clergy";¹ and the royal licence indicated eight points about which Convocation was to deliberate. Of these eight points the bishops took the more important four; regulation of licences for marriage; forms for consecrating churches; qualifications of candidates for Holy Orders; and rules for preparing candidates for Confirmation. The Lower House took the other four. But before very much was done by either body, first the death of Archbishop Tenison, and then the excitement of the Bangorian Controversy, came in the way, and the latter led to the silencing of Convocation for a great deal more than a century.

The nomination of Benjamin Hoadly to the See of Bangor in December 1715 had provoked a great deal of criticism;² and it is characteristic of the age and of the man that, during the six years that he held the see, he never once entered the diocese.³ But it was his sermon before the King, 31st March 1717, on the Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ, that provoked the Bangorian

¹ In 1716 Cambridge sent a loyal address, but Oxford abstained. The Dis-senters sent a long one, part of which is given in Tindal's continuation of Rapin, book xxxi. ch. i.

² In 1705 Hoadly had preached in support of the principles of the Revolution as against divine right. The sermon was denounced in the Lower House of Convocation, and attacked by Atterbury in print. Hoadly defended himself strongly, and was thanked in 1709 by the House of Commons, which also recommended him to the Queen for promotion.

³ December 1733, Phelip Byrom writes to John, that a Mr Clayton brought about 70 persons, *all above 60 years of age*, to be confirmed at Salford Chapel. This shows how rare confirmations must have been in that diocese. Hearne says of Hoadly: "He was preached and wrote against all over the kingdom, occasioned chiefly by a penny sermon of his, which, had they let it alone, would have died in a fortnight's time; to such little beginnings do some men owe their rise." Hoadly's position was carefully examined by J. N. Piggis in the *Guardian* of 11th October 1905. As to his sincerity there need be no doubt.

Controversy. Starting from "My kingdom is not of this world," he denied the existence of a visible Church, repudiated all tests of orthodoxy, and argued in the teeth of Articles XVIII. and XIX. He defined the Church as "the number of men, whether small or great, whether dispersed or united, who truly and sincerely are subjects to Christ alone in matters of religion." He stripped every vestige of supernatural power from the priesthood, and (as Bolingbroke said) made a Bishop to be merely a layman with a crook in his hand. For faith all that is needed is sincerity. Faith in any one Church is no more necessary to salvation than submission to its ordinances. "So daring a sermon has probably never before or since been preached by a Bishop of the English Church" (Perry). It provoked hundreds of pamphlets for and against this form of Latitudinarianism, which received a great impulse from the heated discussion.¹ For about two years the war of pamphlets raged; about fifty writers took part in it, and more than seventy pamphlets appeared in a single month. The whole collection forms "one of the most intricate tangles of fruitless logomachy in the language" (Leslie Stephen).²

But the most important result was that the Lower House of Convocation denounced the tenets of Hoadly, in this sermon and in a previous treatise against the Nonjurors, in such unmeasured terms, that (in Hallam's

¹ Dr White Kennett wrote to Blackwell, 8th June 1717: "I can send you no news but that the paper war about the Bishop of Bangor draws a dreadful deal of ink, black and bitter. The cry is more than the wool on either side. I wish their first word had been spared, for I do not know when the last will be given."—(Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd series, iv. 307.)

² Hallam says that after turning over some forty or fifty tracts, and consuming a good many hours on the controversy, he "should find some difficulty in stating with precision the propositions in dispute" (*History of England*, iii. p. 216). William Law's *Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor* are perhaps the only products of the controversy that are still of value. Hoadly left them unanswered.

scornful phrase) "it was expedient for the State to scatter a little dust over the angry insects." Convocation was prorogued, and was never again summoned to transact business until 1852.

There can be little doubt that this persistent ignoring of Convocation through so many reigns was a serious invasion of constitutional rights; and we may sympathize with Dr Johnson's indignant question in 1763: "Shall the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland have its General Assembly and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?" Granted that Atterbury and his friends had overstated the case for Convocation, especially with regard to the powers of the Lower House; granted also that the Lower House had for years displayed a miserable spirit in reference to the Upper House, and had wasted its energy in assailing writings which were neither heretical nor treasonable; still, within the greatly curtailed limits laid down in the Act of Submission to Henry VIII., Convocation had the right to meet and transact business.¹ That Act had eliminated all possibility of injury to the State; for it decreed, that Convocation cannot (1) meet without the Sovereign's writ, (2) constitute Canons without the royal license, (3) enforce Canons without the royal assent, (4) and then, only if the Canons do not infringe either the royal prerogative or the laws and customs of the realm. Moreover, by the extinction of Convocation the reform of

¹ In his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* in 1777, Burke wrote: "We know that the Convocation of the clergy had formerly been called, and sat with nearly as much regularity to business as Parliament itself. It is now called for form only. . . . It is, however, a part of the Constitution, and may be called out into act and energy whenever there is occasion." In 1731 Dean Swift had written that "God knows from what reason or for what provocations" this "original part of our Constitution" was suspended. Inexpedient and unjust the suspension may have been; but it was not unprovoked. That Convocation was alive to the need of reforms is shown by the list of subjects which it proposed to discuss; e.g. clandestine marriages, non-residence, duelling, want of schools and libraries, etc.

ecclesiastical abuses was rendered almost impossible. Parliament would have too much other business, or too little interest in religious questions, to attend to such matters; and, even if it did, the clergy would be very unwilling to accept the ruling of Parliament. Besides all this, there were many other reforms which were urgently needed, and which Convocation might discuss and suggest to Parliament, if only it had the opportunity of so doing. Without such discussion and suggestion, the reforms would be very slow in coming. It is, of course, possible that Convocation, if it had not been silenced, would simply have gone on discrediting itself with the nation by its bad temper and behaviour; but that is conjecture; the evil might have been merely temporary. What is certain is this, that henceforth the Church of England,—“an integral member of the commonwealth,” as Hallam says, “and the greatest corporation within it,”—was deprived of that right of managing its own affairs which is possessed by every other lawful society; and had to deal with the religious, moral, and social evils of the time with its hands tied behind its back. If it failed in dealing with them, if at last it almost ceased to try to deal with them, the blame for such failure and neglect must not be laid wholly at the Church’s door. And perhaps we may say that yet another thing is certain; viz. that, whether the suppression of Convocation had anything to do with the deterioration or not, the condition of Church, State, and society generally became steadily worse from about 1720 till near the end of the century. The policy of Walpole, which rarely showed any favour to either the English Church or religion in general, and was frequently antagonistic to both, the tastes and characters of the first two Georges, and even the well-meant but eccentric efforts of Queen Caroline on behalf of religion, had a chilling effect upon the develop-

ment of the national Church; and this just at the time when there was need of a mighty development of all the Church's best powers, in order to keep pace with the nation's development in population, in commerce, and in a multitude of those activities which are likely to materialize men's minds and deaden them to all spiritual influences.

The silencing of Convocation was the act of the Whig Government, not of the Bishops or any party among them.¹ Archbishop Wake wished and expected to be allowed to hold a session of Convocation after Christmas 1717; and in 1728 it was hoped that Convocation would be allowed to act. The promotion of Potter to the Primacy in 1737 strengthened these hopes, for his *Treatise on Church Government* was in favour of such a step. In January 1742, the Archdeacon of Lincoln tried to bring business before the Lower House. He was told to put his proposals in writing and present them at the next session. At the next session (March) it was resolved that his proposals should not be received, and they were rejected unread. It was even proposed that the Archdeacon should be censured; but, before that was voted upon, Convocation was prorogued. If that was acquiescing in the action of the Government, it was the doing of the Lower House, not of the Bishops.

¹ Lathbury, *History of Convocation*, ch. xiv.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE SILENCING OF CONVOCATION IN 1717 TO THE DEATH OF QUEEN CAROLINE IN 1737

WILLIAM WAKE, Bishop of Lincoln since 1705, succeeded Tenison in the Primacy in January 1716, and held it till his death in 1737. He was a man of learning and wide sympathies, and was generally on the side of religious toleration. But in 1718 he opposed Lord Stanhope's Bill for repealing parts of the Corporation and Test Acts ;¹ and in 1721 he opposed the proposal to grant certain relief to Quakers. Wake had already distinguished himself in 1703 by his final reply to Atterbury about the rights of Convocations and Synods,² which, like Bentley's reply to Atterbury about the Letters of Phalaris (1699), not merely refuted the adversary, but remains as a permanent settlement of the question. Still earlier (1682-5) he had been in Paris at the time when a Synod of French clergy was drawing up the *Declaratio Cleri Gallicani*. He made the acquaintance of many French divines and savants, and learnt a good deal about Roman methods of controversy. All this he turned to account in dealing with Bossuet in his *Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England* (1686); and it was these experiences which roused in him that intense interest in the Gallican Church which began to bear fruit soon after he became Arch-

¹ Walpole also opposed it, not wishing to provoke the hostility of Churchmen.

² *State of the Church and Clergy of England in their Councils, Synods, Convocations, Conventions, and other their Assemblies, historically deduced.*

bishop of Canterbury. He had an unrivalled correspondence of the most friendly kind with Protestants on the Continent, especially Turretin, Jablonski and Jean le Clerc (Clericus), and showed great sympathy with their efforts to bring Lutherans, Calvinists, and Moravians closer together. Jablonski asked him whether they might not go farther and seek closer relations with Romanists. Wake feared that the arrogant claims of Rome would be fatal to such efforts. Nevertheless, although he thought that negotiations with Rome would be fruitless, Wake himself entered into eager correspondence with leading members of the Gallican Church. He was a great believer in national Churches, and held that they must treat on equal terms: *tractemus, si libet; sed, ut decet, cum aequalibus*. Some of the French clergy were so opposed to the pretensions of the Papacy, as set forth in the Bull *Unigenitus*, issued by Clement XI. in September 1713 against Quesnel and the Jansenists, that they had serious thoughts of seeking union with the Church of England. Beauvoir, chaplain to the English Embassy, wrote to Wake in 1717. He was followed by Du Pin, the Church historian, in February 1718, and by De Girardin. Wake was very conciliatory, and the matter was discussed by the Sorbonne. Indeed his letters were much discussed, and (it is said) admired, in Paris generally. Wake was for no sacrifice of principle, but he advocated intercommunion with charitable recognition of differences; "to agree to own each other as true brethren, and members of the Catholic Christian Church; to agree to communicate in everything we can with one another, which, on their side, is very easy, there being nothing in our offices, in any degree, contrary to their own principles."¹ Du Pin died

¹A considerable portion of the correspondence is in the Appendix to Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*. See also the letter (quoted vol. iii. p. 483, ed. Stubbs), in

in 1719, and the correspondence died also in 1720. It may be doubted whether anyone could have conducted it to an issue that would have been generally acceptable to either the English or the Gallican Church. In England, Wake's efforts were either laughed at as chimerical, or suspected as signs of leanings towards Popery. In France, Gallicanism was discouraged more and more, and eventually was snuffed out. Wake also had some correspondence with the Patriarch of Jerusalem respecting the proposals for union which had been made by some of the Nonjuring Bishops to the Greek Church.¹ As Wake perhaps saw from the outset, that was a still less hopeful project, and it also came to nothing. But, at any rate, these attempts at union between different Christian bodies are evidence of genuine religious zeal in an age which is commonly regarded as one of apathy and indifference.

The new ministry of 1717 (Stanhope, Sunderland, Addison), which suppressed Convocation, set free a good many Jacobites by the Act of Grace. On the other hand, by pressing existing penal laws against Romanists, it turned many of them into Jacobites. This harshness to Anglicans and Roman Catholics was emphasized by manifest tenderness to Dissenters, a tenderness by no means to be regretted, however onesided it may have been. Stanhope would have liked to have abolished, or at least mitigated, the Test and the Corporation Acts; but Sunderland dissuaded him from the attempt. He contented himself with getting the Schism Act repealed, January 1719, and also the Occasional Conformity Act of 1711. This was almost the only piece of English legislation in which George I.

which Wake admits that a Church may exist without bishops. The treatise of the Benedictine Courayer, in defence of the validity of Anglican Orders, is an important product of the correspondence.

¹ A very full account of this is given in Lathbury, *History of the Nonjurors*, ch. viii.

took any interest.¹ He was heartily for the repeal. It was passed by small majorities,² and had Stanhope attempted more, he would probably have carried nothing. Both Archbishops, with Atterbury and Smalridge, voted against the repeal, Hoadly, Willis, Gibson, and Kennett, for it.³ In repealing the Act against Occasional Conformity it was enacted, that no mayor or other magistrate should attend any public worship, other than that of the Church of England, in his gown or with the ensigns of his office, on pain of disqualification for any office whatever.⁴ In 1697, the Lord Mayor, Sir Humphry Edwin, had given great offence by going in state to a Dissenting meeting-house. It is only since 1871 that public functionaries have been free to do as they pleased in this matter.

On 17th June 1719 Joseph Addison died, at the early age of forty-seven. It is not as an English classic, or as a literary artist, that he requires to be noticed here; but as a reformer of manners and as a religious teacher. He was a reformer of manners in more ways than one. Along with his friend Steele, and in a still more skilful and finished way, he proved that literature could have humour, charm, sentiment, subtlety, and interest, without having any taint of impurity or grossness. There was no need to employ the bait of evil suggestiveness, in order to attract readers. Indeed, delicacy of humour could be made more charming than vulgar concessions to pruriency.

¹ In closing the session, 18th April 1719, the King said: "There being nothing more desirable at all times than a firm union between Protestants, I reflect with satisfaction upon the law you have passed this session, which will, I hope, prove effectual for that purpose. As it is a signal instance of moderation and indulgence in our Established Church, so I hope it will beget such a return of gratitude from all dissenting Protestants, as will greatly tend to her honour and security, both which I shall ever have near at heart."

² 86 to 68, and 243 to 202.

³ Yet Hoadly afterwards wrote in defence of the Test and Corporation Acts!

⁴ See W. H. Craig, *Life of Lord Chesterfield*, p. 63.

and coarseness. But it was not only by means of the new periodic essay that Addison and Steele worked for a reformation in social life. In accordance with the powerful exhortations of Jeremy Collier, who died a few years later (1726), they laboured to introduce into the English drama that decorum which, although prevalent in France, had been unknown in England since the Restoration. We, perhaps, are accustomed to think of the French stage as licentious, when compared with our own. But, early in the eighteenth century, it was the English stage which was licentious, while that of France was decent. Steele's four comedies, in which this step was taken, were *The Funeral* (1701), *The Lying Lover* (1703), *The Tender Husband* (1705), and *The Conscious Lovers* (1722). In *Joseph Andrews*, iii. 11, Fielding makes Parson Adams exclaim: "I never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read but *Cato* and *The Conscious Lovers*; and I must own in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon." This is a considerable tribute to the reforming efforts of Addison and Steele.¹ In the *Conscious Lovers*, which was a great success, as in the *Lying Lover*, which had been a failure, Steele attacked the senseless practice of duelling; and in several numbers of the *Tatler*² he continued his efforts to drive this custom out of fashion. In his early days he had nearly killed a man, who insisted on fighting him, and he never forgot the horror of it. In endeavouring to disarm him, Steele had run him through the body.

But Addison is of great interest to us, not only as a reformer of manners, especially in reference to literature and the stage, but also as a direct teacher of religion. His

¹ Thomson, in the *Seasons* (*Winter*, *sub fin.*), gives high praise to the *Conscious Lovers*.

² Nos. 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 39.

father had intended that he should take Holy Orders; but Addison had too high a conception of the duties of a clergyman to see his way to taking this step. This, however, did not prevent him from coming forward at times as a sort of lay preacher. What Parson Adams says of the *Conscious Lovers* is eminently true of the *Spectator*; in it "there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon." Indeed, there are some numbers which only need a text of Scripture to make them sermons. Addison takes a line or two of Horace or Virgil; but words of Scripture would have been equally suitable to the telling discourse which follows, although they might have repelled some of the many readers who would be attracted rather than otherwise by a classical quotation. Dr N. Drake, in his work on the *Essays illustrative of the Spectator, etc.*, quotes a contemporary of Addison as saying that "all the pulpit discourses of a year scarce produced half the good as flowed from the *Spectator* of one day." That, of course, is exaggeration, dry and unmoving as the pulpit discourses often were in an age when the preacher's chief aim was to avoid 'enthusiasm.'¹ But the *Spectator* sometimes had a circulation of 20,000; and, if we reckon that each copy was read by several persons, the congregation to which Addison preached week by week must have been a very large one. His sermonettes are specially to be noted when they occur

¹ "As it was his object to form a steady nucleus of religious practice, there are few appeals in *The Spectator* to religious emotion: the nearest approach to personal feeling on the subject is Steele's paper on Good Friday [No. 356]. Addison, whose strong personal religion is not to be questioned, contents himself with defining the limits of religious action. He is for cheerful piety as opposed to austerity, for devotion as distinguished from enthusiasm, for reasonable worship, but not for superstition" [Nos. 111, 185, 186, 201, 356, 465] (Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, v. p. 77). See Gosse's eulogy of Addison and Steele, *Eighteenth Century Literature*, pp. 193-195; also in *English Literature*, iii. pp. 222, 223. Berkeley called *The Spectator* a "noble entertainment for persons of a refined taste."

as introductions to one of his hymns in the Saturday issues; *e.g.* Nos. 441, 453, 465, 489, 513. And the hymns themselves were, no doubt, a real spiritual help to many who in public worship never heard anything but Tate and Brady. They are not adapted for congregational singing; and Wesley and the Evangelicals may be right in saying that they are wanting in 'unction.' But they have a quiet fervour of their own, and they have the supreme merit of simplicity. Dr Johnson was specially fond of reciting the one which begins, "The spacious firmament on high"; but some of the stanzas in "When all Thy mercies, O my God," are perhaps the best in this small collection.¹

Dr Johnson has recognized Addison's great merits, both as a purifier of literature and as a teacher of religion. He is best on the former theme; but his words in both cases are worth quoting. "It is justly observed by Tickell, that Addison employed wit on the side of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character, 'above all Greek, above all Roman fame' (Pope). No greater felicity can genius attain, than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness, and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having 'turned many to righteousness' (Daniel xii. 3)." And again, on the

¹ See C. J. Abbey, *Religious Thought in Old English Verse*, pp. 325 ff.

religious teaching of Addison, he says: "As a teacher of wisdom he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic (*i.e.* wildly emotional) or superstitious; he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy and all the cogency of argument are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being" (*Life of Addison, sub fin.*). The last is Johnson's own phrase; Addison commonly speaks of God as "the Supreme Being," a title which expresses the Deistical view of God, and perhaps indicates that this view influenced the thought and language of many who were not Deists. It is only fair to Johnson to add that he nobly followed Addison's example in using his own great abilities and attainments on the side of religion and virtue.

How valuable the preaching of this "parson in a tie-wig" (*i.e.* in lay attire),¹ as Swift called Addison, was, will be appreciated the more, when we remember that it was precisely at this time that the whole nation went almost mad on the subject of stock-jobbing; so that, as Smollett says, all distinctions of party, religion, sex, and circumstances were swallowed up. Exchange Alley was crowded with statesmen and clergymen, Churchmen and Dissenters, Whigs and Tories, and even women; no one thinking of anything else than buying or selling stocks. In 1720, the year after Addison died, the South Sea Bubble burst, thousands were ruined, the Government was seriously crippled, and the whole country was in confusion.² This

¹ Dr John Wallis, the mathematician (1616-1703), is said to have been the first "English divine" who wore a wig.—(John Thomas Smith, *A Book for a Rainy Day*, 1826.)

² Gibbon's account of the panic should be read (*Memoirs, sub init.*). His grandfather was one of the Directors.

state of panic, coupled with the fact that a son was born to the Pretender at Rome, 31st December, greatly encouraged the Jacobites. The result was a plot, in which Bishop Atterbury became a conspirator, for which he was deprived of his see and banished.¹ He went into exile, June 1723, and never returned. It is perhaps true that Atterbury was a conscientious conspirator. He was heart and soul for the Church of England; and he had come to the conclusion that the Church would be safer under a devout Romanist, than under a Nothingarian King, such as George I. But he soon found that, if it is possible to become a conspirator with a clear conscience, it is very difficult to continue to be one with clean hands. In that age of intrigue and insincerity it was specially difficult to do so.² Perhaps the best that can be said for Atterbury is that he neither sold himself, nor would save himself, for money or promotion. But he was not above the temptation to deny that he had any share in schemes which he did his utmost to promote. He was condemned by eighty-three to forty-three votes, and all the Bishops, excepting his old schoolfellow, Gastrell of Chester, voted for his condemnation. But the rank and file of the clergy sympathized with him, not because he was a Jacobite, but because he was so staunch an opponent of Rome and

¹ He was sent to the Tower, 24th August 1722, and not very well treated. See Hearne, 4th and 9th September 1722, who also notes the effects of the South Sea Bubble, 20th November 1721. For Hearne's estimate of Atterbury as a writer see 16th January 1711. Pope wrote his Epitaph. See *The Fothergills of Ravenstonedale*, pp. 71, 84.

² Lord Chesterfield said: "I have often had the letters of the same man in my hands at once, some to try to make his peace at home, and others to the Pretender to assure him it was only a feigned reconciliation that he might be better able to serve him." Shippen, the Jesuit, was lauded for "swearing against his conscience to serve the good cause," and for keeping "his honesty" (swearing one way and voting the other) "at a time when almost everybody is wavering" (Morice to Atterbury, in Lord Mahon, ii. p. 139). See a paper on Atterbury in the *Cornhill*, August 1905.

Dissent, and because they thought that he had been unkindly treated in the Tower. The wretched prince for whom he had sacrificed so much, showed little gratitude to him in his exile. He died, 15th February 1732.

The banishment of Atterbury was a triumph for the Whigs, who, in spite of the split in the party in 1717, still remained dominant. Possibly they did not represent the majority of the nation; but they had the unfailing support of the King, and of the moneyed classes, as also of the Dissenters. The national debt was a source of strength to them. If the Whig Government was turned out, would the interest be paid? All who had shares in the Bank of England or the East India Company had this motive to influence them, for both the Bank and the Company were creditors to the Government. Yet another source of strength was the steady immigration of Protestant refugees into England, nearly all of whom joined the Whigs. Of course they were attracted by the Whig principle, that the Government should give perfect toleration to all Protestant bodies. Atterbury wrote: "I scarce ever knew a foreigner settled in England, but became a Whig in a little time after mixing with us."

England was regarded on the Continent as the home of liberty and philosophy. Locke, who represents the cultivated common-sense of the intelligent Englishman, had laid the foundations of the religious and philosophical beliefs which were to pervade the intellectual atmosphere for a good many years. Among these beliefs was the necessity for religious toleration; and outside England the whole nation got the credit of holding this belief. At any rate the welcome which had been constantly given to the persecuted during nearly two hundred years was a considerable guarantee. And England reaped a rich

harvest through its character for toleration. Hundreds of the best types of continental workers continually streamed in, enriching English life with new blends of character and with new forms of industry, which became all the more valuable when they had passed through several generations. About 1720, when the population of London was less than 700,000, it had thirty-five French Protestant churches. And there were important settlements of refugees at Norwich, Ipswich, Yarmouth, Canterbury, Sandwich, Exeter, Barnstable, and Bideford. There were makers of glass from Paris, of cambric from Cambray, lace from Valenciennes, cloth from Antwerp and Bruges, pottery from Delft, silk from Lyons and Tours, and so on. These immigrants introduced vegetables and flowers hitherto unknown. If Romanism had most political power in Europe, Protestantism had three-fourths of the commerce,—Britain, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the Hanse towns.

But no such renovating and enriching power from the Continent seemed to arrest the decline in the Church of England. The clergy, in truth, were already at a great disadvantage at the close of the reign of George I. 1. It has been already pointed out that the majority of them were of inferior social standing.¹ 2. They were mere officials for the performance of public worship. Utterly unlike the modern clergyman, they had no field for activity in the organization of charity, or education, or social reforms. 3. There was in the nation, as a reaction

¹ See Calamy, *Own Life*, ii. p. 217; *Guardian*, No. 163; *Tatler*, No. 255. But the Dissenting historian remarks that there were "rectors, vicars, and curates in small towns and still smaller villages, who attended to their duties with great conscientiousness, and went down to the grave in peace, leaving names to be inscribed with honour over their graves; or, what is better, to be enshrined in loving hearts." He gives John Bold of Stoney Stanton as an example.—(Dr J. Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, i. p. 128.)

from Roman pretensions, rather a strong feeling against sacerdotalism; so that the exclusive right of the clergy to administer the sacraments did not of itself produce a feeling of respect. Their calling was regarded as necessary, but not as specially sacred. 4. They had seriously discredited themselves by strenuously preaching the doctrines of divine right and non-resistance, and then accepting the Hanoverians. They had not had the courage to recant and say that there were emergencies in which it became lawful to resist a tyrant; and yet they did not resign. They kept their livings, without making the confession which would have justified them in keeping them. They were regarded as trimmers, and their chief aim seemed to be not to commit themselves by going very far in any direction. In the *Tatler* (No. 220) Mr Bickerstaff explains an invention called the Ecclesiastical Thermometer, showing the temperature of the English Church in the mean between heat and cold. "We should take care never to overshoot ourselves even in the pursuit of virtue." 5. Livings were often used as pensions for younger sons, and pluralism was common. 6. Bishops in this matter were as bad as their clergy; and it was not easy for them to put down pluralism, when they practised it themselves. It was a common thing for a Bishop to hold benefices with his see. The Bishop of Rochester commonly held the Deanery of Westminster. Herring, when Bishop of Bangor, was also Dean of Rochester. Thomas Newton laments the number of posts which he had to resign when he became Bishop of Bristol, and thinks that he is almost foolishly scrupulous in giving up a city living, because he was to be Dean of St Paul's as well as Bishop of Bristol. Burnet writes very severely of the "scandalous practices of non-residence and pluralities," which are "a shameful profanation of holy things," and "the peculiar disgrace of our Church, which,

for aught I know, is the only Church in the world that tolerates it." 7. While livings were strung together in order to make an income for younger sons, or others who clamoured for a livelihood, bishoprics were treated as political rewards, for which the clergy intrigued. Dr Johnson groans that "no man can now be made a Bishop for his learning and piety; his only chance of promotion is his being connected with some one who has parliamentary interest." Bishop Newton, in his autobiography, lets the world see the kind of motives which influenced him and some of his brother Bishops in seeking promotion. The letter of the Bishop of Ossory to Lord Sackville, 9th July 1732, thanking him for getting him the See of Clogher, is similarly instructive.¹ 8. It is remarkable that, at a time when the national Church was so zealously supported, and when the collective body of the clergy could be so influential, if they were once roused, as in the Sacheverell trial, to make the effort, the individual cleric was commonly disliked or despised. Caricatures of the clergy were very popular, and there was a manifest desire to make the worst of clerical failings. Swift repeatedly calls attention to this tendency. In 1708, he complains that people "will tell you, they honour a clergyman; but talk at the same time as if there were not three in the kingdom, who could fall in with their definition. . . . Therefore a Church of England man abhors the humour of the age, in delighting to fling scandals upon the clergy in general."² Twelve years later he complains of "the perpetual turning into ridicule the very function of the priesthood, in the most modern comedies." In Parliament you will see "all enemies of the clergy heard with the utmost applause." In short, at this time, "many of the

¹ *Pryings among Private Papers*, pp. 183-185, 1906.

² *The Sentiments of a Church of England Man*.

clergy were never more learned or so scurvily treated."¹ Swift's own sketch of Corusodes in *The Fates of Clergymen* may be remembered in this connexion.² He there shows how a meritorious clergyman may be neglected, while a mean, pushing, and worldly one gets on. No doubt the clergy had partly brought this unpopularity upon themselves by the low standard of their own lives, and by their nervous anxiety about their own small interests: but it is evident that irreligious *animus* against them caused their faults to be grossly exaggerated. Be this as it may, there the feeling was, whether it was just or not. And the consciousness that they were unpopular had a very bad effect upon many of the clergy: it often robbed them of the last remnants of their self-respect. And one cannot expect large numbers of men of one and the same profession to bear unjust ridicule and abuse heroically: the rank and file are sure to be the worse for it. Yet it is worth noting that, during this period of clerical unpopularity (1710-60), an unpopularity which even Addison had been unable to remedy or even check,³ the worst faults laid to their charge are commonly greed and sloth: accusations of gross immorality are rare.⁴ Smollett, who is a layman and a

¹ *Letter to a Young Clergyman*, 1720.

² *Intelligencer*, Nos. 5 and 7. Bishop Newton's autobiography shows clearly enough how some of the clergy intrigued to gain promotion.

³ Gray says: "Addison, who formed and influenced the national taste in a thousand instances, could not with all his efforts do it in this case; yet perhaps we may, in no long time, see the end of this fashion."—(*Essay on the Poems of Lydgale*.)

⁴ Addison's delightful picture of the innkeeper must be once more quoted. "I found he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion, from the parson of his parish; and had scarce any other notion of religion but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. He enlarged on the happiness of the neighbouring shire, for there is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole county, except the Bishop." This worthy landlord "had not time to go to church himself, but had headed a mob at the pulling down of two or three meeting-houses" (*Freeholder*, No. 22, March 1717). Nor were things much better among the Dissenters. "Religion, whether in the Established Church or out of it, never made less

contemporary (1721-1771), in his *History* (1757), states that under George II. "the clergy were generally pious and exemplary." 9. As one more item among the disadvantages and defects of the clergy in this period may be mentioned the fact that they had to live under the blighting influence of such a minister as Walpole. His maxim always was to leave things alone, *quieta non movere*. The hubbub caused by the impeachment of Sacheverell inspired him with an absolute horror of allowing any change in ecclesiastical affairs. He would protect the Church against assaults from the outside; but he would tolerate no reforms from within. His treatment of Berkeley about the founding of a Missionary College in the Bermudas is a case in point. His aim was to avoid stirring up dormant intolerance. He would allow any amount of abuses to continue rather than provoke a heated controversy. Such a policy was fatal to Church reform.

The cautious policy of Walpole in reference to ecclesiastical affairs was shared by George I. He was ready to support the Church, as he had promised to do, but he did not want any commotion. The King and his minister, by a mild administration of the penal laws, secured a good deal of practical liberty. They did nothing to improve the position of Romanists in England; but their Protestantism was as free from fanaticism as their other sentiments. By the laxity of their private lives they did grievous harm to national morality, and by their want of decorum in public life they lowered the tone of government. But, along with the ignoble traits which disfigure the careers of both, we may recognize in each of them courage and moderation, a general love of justice, and an interest in the well-being of the people.

progress. . . . Nothing that required great exertion or great sacrifice was either attempted or done."—(Skeats, pp. 313, 315.)

George I. started on his last journey to Hanover, 3rd June 1727, apparently in excellent health.¹ He died at Osnabrück on the 12th, and it was some days before his successor and his English subjects heard the news. The pause caused by his death will give an opportunity of treating of the great controversy which raged in England during his reign and that of his successor, the controversy between the orthodox divines of the Church of England and the Deists.

Deism, like Gnosticism, is hardly capable of definition. It would not be possible to frame a definition which would cover the tenets of the Deistical writers of the eighteenth century. The Deists were not a sect, and they had no organization or common creed, which was one of the reasons for their rapid collapse. On the whole, what they contended *for* was Natural Religion, and what they contended *against* was Supernatural Religion. Supernatural or Revealed Religion is confessedly imperfect; then how can it have proceeded from a perfect Being? Strangely enough, they do not seem to have seen that Natural Religion is equally imperfect. The existence of God they regarded as a dictate of reason, and they admitted all that could be inferred from the fact of His existence: but everything else was superstition, or at any rate superfluous. It might or might not be true; but it was unnecessary. The topics on which most of the Deists were fond of insisting were these. (1) The improbability that a religion, intended to be universal, would be revealed to one obscure people, and based upon uncertain historical evidence. If God had revealed a law for the whole human race, He

¹ Frederick the Great said of him that he was free from ostentation and deceit, and that he ruled England by respecting liberty, while he used the money, which was voted to him by Parliament, to bribe Parliament itself. For a favourable estimate of him see M'Carthy, *Four Georges*, i, ch. xvii.; also Tindal's continuation of Rapin, book xxxi, ch. v. Lord Acton's is unfavourable, *Lectures*, pp. 266 ff.

would have made it known to everyone, and would have enabled everyone to recognize it as His. (2) The doubtful character of the text of the Bible, which swarms with divergent readings. Inspired writings would have been kept free from such things. (3) The unsatisfactory nature of the evidence from prophecy. Prophecies are often so vague that they can be made to fit a variety of supposed fulfilments. The cases in which there seems to be exact fulfilment, even in details, are few, and may be mere coincidences. (4) The unsatisfactory character of the evidence for miracles. We cannot cross-examine the witnesses. (5) The moral difficulties of the Bible, especially the bribing men to good behaviour by hopes of reward and fear of punishment. (6) The sufficiency of Natural Religion. Even if what is supposed to have been subsequently revealed be partly or wholly true, it is not needed. Man can shape his conduct aright without it. And it may be partly or wholly false. Indeed, the clearness and sufficiency of the Law of Nature constitute a presumption that God has made no other revelation.

Many of the Deists disclaimed all intention of making an attack upon Christianity.¹ And, although some were scoffers and had very little serious purpose of contending for any kind of religion, yet some were certainly earnest men, who believed that those portions of the Christian faith to which they objected were really later excrescences or disfigurements, from which it ought to be freed. By setting these aside, men's acceptance of the Christian faith would be increased. It was this overgrowth of strange

¹ "Averse as I am to the cause of Atheism or the name of Deist, when taken in a sense exclusive of revelation, I consider still that the root of all is Theism, and that to be a settled Christian it is necessary to be first of all a good Theist, for Theism can only be opposed to Polytheism or Atheism. Nor have I patience to hear the name of Deist, the highest of all names, decried and set in opposition to Christianity."—(Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, ii. p. 209).

opinions which had done so much harm, by obscuring the simplicity of the original creed, and by driving men to believe nothing, because they were asked to believe too much. Just as the Anglican contends that Romanists have made faith too difficult by requiring men to believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Infallibility of the Pope, so these Deists contended that both Romanists and Protestants had made faith too difficult by requiring men to believe in the Incarnation and the Atonement. These doctrines might be true; but to many people they seemed to be incredible, and they ought not to be made articles of faith.

Since the close of the eighteenth century, Deism has been distinguished from Theism, and has, in consequence, acquired a somewhat worse meaning, the difference being that Theism affirms, while Deism is supposed to deny, the immanence of God in the universe, *i.e.* the doctrine of a Providence. According to this distinction, the Deist maintains that God created the universe with certain laws, and then left it to itself, to work according to those laws; while the Theist contends that God not only created the world, but ceaselessly watches over it and controls it. But, in the eighteenth century, the Deists were most of them Theists. They admitted, and indeed contended for, the truth that God is the moral Governor of the world which He has made.

In a somewhat similar way, both 'freethinker' and 'rationalist' have come to have a worse meaning than they had a century and a half ago. A freethinker was one who claimed the freedom of subjecting to criticism even a revelation that professed to be supernatural, and a rationalist was one who maintained that the credentials of every religion must be submitted to reason. Later, the terms came to imply that the results of the process had

been negative ; that the freethinker had freed himself from all religious belief, and that the rationalist had rejected everything that human reason cannot comprehend. Long before the end of the eighteenth century 'freethinking' had begun to have a bad sense.¹ But Antony Collins, in his *Discourse of Freethinking*, uses it in a good sense. He counts Milton, Cudworth, More, Locke, and Tillotson as freethinkers. Missionaries invite the heathen to think freely: are they to cease to use their reason after they become Christians?

The history of English Deism begins in the middle of the seventeenth century, and has about fifty years of growth, fifty years of maturity, and then about fifteen years of very rapid decline. We may take the *Religio Laici* (1645) and *De Religione Gentilium* (published posthumously in 1663) of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), "the Father of English Deism," as our starting-point. He had lived through the persecution of the Puritans under Laud, and had seen much of the persecution of Churchmen under the Long Parliament; and he asked whether there was not something more certain than that which either party tried to enforce. Was not the duty of love to God and to man more certain than the necessity of episcopacy or doctrines about grace? The doctrines of practical religion are plain, and in man's heart from the first, and are found in heathen religions as well as in Judaism and Christianity. External revelation may be true; but it cannot be so sure as the internal revelation granted to each soul. In this manner Lord Herbert leads the way towards the comparative study of religions. He

¹ "'Freethinker' has, like 'Tyrant' of old, degenerated from its original signification, and is now supposed to denote something contrary to wit and reason" (*The Guardian*, No. 39, 25th April 1713). See also *The Spectator*, No. 234, 28th November 1711.

was followed by Charles Blount (1654-93), who is best known from his *Anima Mundi* (1679), which was condemned by Compton, Bishop of London, his *Apollonius Tyaneus* (1680), and his *Oracles of Reason* (1693), which appeared about the time when he died by his own hand. His writings are among the earliest avowals of Deism; but by Deism he means Natural Religion, without a denial of Christianity. When contrasted with other writings, the Bible is plainly divine; but its stories are not to be taken literally. The supposition that he meant to insinuate that the miracles attributed to Apollonius of Tyana are as credible as those attributed to Christ, is not supported by evidence. He admitted the probability of miracles being granted in order to support important truths.

The second period of fifty years begins with the *Christianity not Mysteries* (1696) of "John" Toland (1670-1722), as he called himself, although he had been christened Junius Janus. The book provoked a storm of criticism, and with it the Deistical controversy begins. Its second title shows its drift; Or, *A Discourse showing that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason, nor above it, and that no Christian doctrine can be properly called a Mystery*. Toland's vanity would be flattered at finding his book censured by the Lower House of Convocation as impious and immoral, and condemned by the Irish Parliament to be burnt by the hangman;¹ but it got him into serious trouble. He was called a Socinian and a Jesuit by people who had never read his book, and declared that by the grace of God they never would. He declared that

¹ Locke was told that "the Dissenters were the chief promoters of this matter." For the treatment of the book by the English Convocation see Calamy, *Own Life*, i. p. 480, and Lathbury, *History of Convocation*. Toland is perhaps the "atheistical author" laughed at in *The Spectator*, No. 166; comp. No. 234.

he was not a Socinian, that he accepted the Christian Creed, but that he wished to draw men's minds from speculation about mysteries to the practice of virtue. It was a common line for Deists to take, that the moral precepts of the Gospel will give us plenty to think about and to cultivate. What transcends reason may be left on one side; what contradicts reason cannot be true. The *Characteristics* (1711) of Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713). This was a criticism of religion on the moral side, as Toland's was on the doctrinal. The one asserted the supremacy of the natural reason, the other the supremacy of natural ethics. A want of seriousness is charged against Shaftesbury, and he is commonly treated as a supercilious commentator on the controversy rather than as an earnest combatant.¹ But, in spite of his laboured style, his writings had great influence both in England and on the Continent. Shaftesbury is one of the few writers mentioned by Bishop Butler, who treats, to a considerable extent, of the same subjects, owes a good deal to him, and writes respectfully of him for showing the "natural obligation of virtue." In Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher* and *A Vindication of the Theory of Vision* most of Shaftesbury's peculiar tenets are treated. Diderot, Lessing, Wieland, and Leibnitz were all students of the *Characteristics*.

Two assailants of the *external* evidences of the divine character of Christianity may now be mentioned. Antony Collins (1676-1729), after publishing a *Discourse of Free-thinking* (1713), and *Grounds and Reasons of Christian*

¹ "You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a Philosopher in vogue; I will tell you. 1. He was a Lord; 2. he was as vain as any of his readers; 3. men are prone to believe what they do not understand; 4. they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; 5. they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; 6. he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said."—(Gray to R. Stonehewer, 18th August 1758.)

Religion (1724), produced his *Scheme of Literal Prophecy* (1726). Have prophecies been fulfilled? Is there any supposed fulfilment which is certainly subsequent to the prediction, could not have been foreseen by ordinary sagacity, and cannot be a mere coincidence? All three writings provoked many replies, the first being very roughly handled by Bentley¹ (*Remarks*, by Phileleutherus Lipsiensis, who exposed many gross mistranslations and other blunders, but left the main question pretty much as it was. Swift brought keen irony to bear on it in *Mr Collins's Discourse of Freethinking put into Plain English, for the use of the Poor*. Berkeley criticized it more gently in the *Guardian*.² Warburton pronounced the *Grounds and Reasons of Christian Religion* to be the most plausible attack ever made on Christianity. Bishop E. Chandler's criticism of it led to the third treatise, which anticipates modern criticism as to the date of the Book of Daniel. As Collins assailed the external evidence derived from prophecy, so Thomas Woolston (1670-1733) assailed the external evidence derived from miracles in *Six Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour* (1727-29).³ He was prosecuted for blasphemy and imprisoned, and he died in prison. He was perhaps insane; but his book went through six editions, and provoked sixty replies; among them was Sherlock's *Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1729), which ran to fourteen editions. While posing as a judge with an unprejudiced jury Sherlock is really an advocate with his mind made up beforehand. Mark Pattison remarks that "the

¹ "It is rare sport to Bentley, this rat-hunting in an old rick, and he lays about him in high glee, braining an authority at every blow."—(Mark Pattison, *Essays and Reviews*, p. 308.)

² March to August 1713; Nos. 3, 35, 39, 55, 62, 70, 77, 83, 88, 89, 126.

³ John Byrom visited Woolston just after the sixth Discourse was published, 19th February 1729.

apologists of that day had in like manner left the bench for the bar, and taken a brief for the Apostles. They are impatient at the smallest demur, and deny loudly that there is any weight in anything advanced by their opponents. In the way they override the most serious difficulties, they show anything but the temper which is supposed to qualify for the weighing of evidence. The astonishing want of candour in their reasoning, their blindness to real difficulty, the ill-concealed pre-determination to find a particular verdict, constitute a class of writers more calculated than any other to damage their own cause with young ingenuous minds" (*Essays and Reviews*, p. 304).

Matthew Tindal (c. 1653-1733) was a pupil of George Hickes, the Nonjuror. Under James II. he became a Romanist; but he returned to the communion of the English Church in 1688, and wrote pamphlets on the Whig and Low Church side. But the book which made him famous was *Christianity as old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730). On the title-page he quoted from Augustine's *Retractations*: "The thing which is now called the Christian religion was also among the ancients, nor was it wanting from the beginning of the human race, until Christ Himself came in the flesh, when the true religion which then was began to be called Christian." John Leland said that the title of the book ought to have been, "Christianity *not* as old as the Creation, and therefore false." Tindal called himself a Christian Deist or Theist, and used conventional Christian phrases; but he denied that Revealed Religion enjoins any duties other than those already enjoined by Natural Religion. The Gospel is an authoritative republication of Natural Religion, which it confirms, but does not augment. Christianity does not require us to

believe more or do more than was required before. Tindal's main argument is this. "God is infinitely wise, perfect, and unchangeable. Human nature is also unchangeable. Therefore the law which God lays down for men will be perfect and unchangeable." The fallacy of this is prodigious. Of course, if human nature is that which is common to all men, this nature is always the same. But that is a very different thing from the statement that men in all ages have, *for all religious purposes*, always been the same; which is what Tindal's argument implies. Tindal has been called "the great apostle of Deism," and his book "the Deist's Bible." It was quite the most important Deistical work thus far, and was the one against which Butler's *Analogy* was more particularly directed. It provoked more than a hundred replies, of which Conybeare's *Defence of Revealed Religion* (1732) ranks second to the *Analogy* (1736). William Law's *Case of Reason* (1731) was another able reply.

We may pass by Thomas Morgan and Thomas Chubb as comparatively unimportant Deistical writers, and also David Hume, as not being a Deist.¹ The scepticism of Hume, like the dogmatism of Hobbes, went deeper than the Deistical controversy. For the short period of decline (1745-60) it will suffice to take Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751) as a representative. His *Essays* he bequeathed to David Mallet, who published them in 1754. "Sir," said Dr Johnson, "he was a scoundrel and a coward: a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality, a coward because he had no resolution to fire

¹ Mrs Mallet said to Hume: "Allow me to introduce myself to you. It is right that we Deists should know one another." "Madam," said he, "I am not a Deist, and do not wish to be known by that name." Could he have said what he was?

it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death" (Boswell, March 1754). Bolingbroke heaped together the Deistical objections to Christianity, making a special attack on St Paul, who, he said, was an "absurd, profane, obscure, trifling writer," practising "hypocrisy" and "dissimulation." He thought it very inconsistent in Locke to contend for the reasonableness of Christianity and yet write commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, to which, "by happy conjectures and a great license of paraphrasing, he has given an air of coherence, consistency, and rationality." Bolingbroke himself is inconsistent: he rambles, repeats, and contradicts himself. Sometimes he says that in Nature there are features which contradict the justice and goodness of God; Nature can only tell us of His wisdom and power. Sometimes he says that, even if there is no future state, the justice and goodness of God can be vindicated.¹ The *Essays* fell very flat, and provoked few replies. Partly the controversy had worn itself out; partly the schemes of the Pretender diverted attention from religion to politics.

The above sketch shows that it was soon after Bishop Butler was born (18th May 1692) that fully developed Deism began to be brought prominently before the notice of educated Englishmen. But in one particular the sketch is as yet seriously defective. It may be right to regard Lord Herbert of Cherbury as "the Father of English Deism," although he has some affinities with the

¹ "Bolingbroke is a great name in politics, but the pretentious and verbose inanity of his theological writings fully justifies the criticism 'leaves without fruit,' which Voltaire is said to have applied to him" (Locky, *Eighteenth Century*, ii. p. 529). John Brown, in his *Estimate*, thinks that the sceptical world had become too frivolous to attack "five huge Quarto Volumes, like five coarse Dishes of Beef and Mutton," and that this explains "why, in an Age of irreligion, so capital a Book as the Writings of Lord Bolingbroke, met with so cold a reception" (p. 56).

Cambridge Platonists rather than with the Deists. But Deism, as a stream of thought in England, has its main source, not in Lord Herbert or Blount, who were Deists, but in Locke, who was not one.

When John Locke (1632-1704) wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* (1690) he had no intention of supplying Deists with philosophical principles: yet that was what he did. Knowledge, he says, is the perception of the relations between ideas, and reason is the faculty by which ideas are compared. Everything, therefore, religion included, must be submitted to reason. That theory of knowledge cuts at the foundation of a religion which is based on mysteries; for a mystery may be something which cannot be represented to reason in clear ideas, and is therefore, on Locke's principles, unreasonable and untenable. Locke tried to draw a wide distinction between "certainty of knowledge," which was connected with clear ideas, and "assurance of faith," which depended on divine revelation. He held that the Scriptures were the voice of God. So did Toland. But Toland maintained that there was nothing in the Bible which we were required to believe, except what was consonant with reason. And Locke at times seems to have said much the same. Locke supplemented the *Essay* by the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, which he says is an argument against Deism. But many on both sides regarded it as a support to Deism.¹ It was published 1695; and Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* appeared in 1696. Locke repudiated Toland as his disciple, but Toland claimed Locke as his teacher. Toland, fairly enough, drew from Locke conclusions which

¹ Locke was very indignant when Bishop Stillingfleet coupled him with Toland and the Unitarians as "gentlemen of the new way of thinking." Edward Byrom, in writing to his son John, 16th September 1709, calls Locke "a Socinian or an atheist."

Locke failed to draw. If Christianity was true *because* it was comprehensible to reason, then whatever was mysterious or above reason lacked sufficient evidence. Reason alone could decide whether testimony was adequate or not: and how could reason accept, as sufficient, evidence respecting things which were above reason? The answer to this is, that external evidence may satisfy human reason that what it cannot comprehend may be in accordance with the Divine reason, and may therefore be true. Human reason need not reject all that to it is incomprehensible. But such an answer is fatal to Locke's argument that Christianity has, as evidence for its truth, the fact that it can be made clear to reason. Toland held that, though a man may assent to what he cannot understand, yet he never really accepts till he does understand. And we are not required to believe anything that we cannot understand.

The rapid collapse of Deism in England is remarkable, but not surprising. (1) It never became a coherent system, still less a living creed. (2) Though sometimes vigorous in criticism, it was always weak in constructive power. (3) Its defenders sometimes contradicted one another. (4) It was cold, and kindled no enthusiasm: but for the serious issues involved, it was to most men uninteresting. (5) Above all, it contradicted experience. Its main contention, that Natural Religion is clear and certain, is manifestly untrue. Among the causes of its sudden decline need not be reckoned the ability of its opponents. The writings of Berkeley, the most acute metaphysician of the age,¹ and of Butler, the most philosophical theologian, perhaps did not produce very much effect till the collapse had come about through other causes. The scholarship of Bentley, the satire of Swift, the reasonableness of

¹ Especially, *Alciphron*, or the *Minute Philosopher* (1732).

Conybeare and one or two more,¹ may have made converts, but they cannot have been numerous. Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (1698) converted Charles Gildon, who had edited Blount's writings; but its circular argument cannot have convinced many. Deism in England died of its own defects, rather than under the blows of its assailants. And, in his *View of the Deistical Writers* (1754-6), John Leland, who had been a combatant, wrote its epitaph. But no epitaph could preserve these writers from oblivion. "Who," asked Burke, some thirty years later, "Who, born within the last forty years; has read one word of Collins, Toland, Tindal, Chubb, and Morgan? Who now reads Bolingbroke? Who ever read him through? Ask the booksellers of London what is become of all these lights of the world." The question may be asked still. Deism, and the deeper scepticism which it generated, had to cross over to France and be reinforced there, before they became generally influential in England. The English Deists and sceptics greatly influenced Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. In France, the admixture of theology and religion with philosophy became less and less; and the result came back to England in such books as Paine's *Age of Reason* (1794), which was mostly written in Paris.

During the Deistical controversy the laws against Socinians and anti-Trinitarians remained unrepealed. In 1697, a deputation of Dissenting ministers had asked William III. to forbid the printing of Socinian books.² In

¹ Perhaps the cleverness of Young's *Night Thoughts* ought to be mentioned in this connexion. He opposes Deism, especially as it appears, without the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in Pope's *Essay on Man*. But "Young shows his inferiority to Pope by inventing phrases for copybooks, where Pope coins proverbs for cultivated thinkers."—(Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. p. 363.)

² Deism did not spread much among the Dissenters. "Among the plain congregations of the dissenters," say Dogue and Bennett, "a deist was hardly to be found";

1702, Thomas Emlyn published his *Humble Inquiry into the Scripture Account of Jesus Christ*. In 1703, he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £1000. Bishop Hoadly commented very severely on the case. But such instances were rare. It was easy to teach Arianism or Unitarianism without being molested. Ninety years later Fox tried to get the law against Unitarians repealed, and even Lord North supported him: but Pitt and Burke opposed, and the Bill was lost. In 1730, three undergraduates were expelled from Oxford for professing Deism: and in 1739 similar penalties were inflicted at Cambridge. But it would be almost true to say that, of the many results of the Deistical controversy in the eighteenth century, the writings of Berkeley and of Butler alone survive.

George II. (1727-60) was no more of an English Churchman than George I., and had no taste for theology or learning of any kind. As Chesterfield says, "he troubled himself little about religion, but jogged on quietly in that in which he had been bred, without scruples, doubts, zeal, or inquiry." Yet England owes more to him than is commonly allowed. He was vain, narrow, niggardly, ungracious, ignorant, and devoid of all sympathy with culture. He was an undutiful son, an unfaithful husband, and an unrighteous father. It was difficult for anyone to become or remain his friend. Lord Hervey's testimony may be accepted, when he says of him, that "he was always averse to giving anything to anybody. Many ingredients concurred to form this reluctance. One was that, taking all his notions from a German measure, he thought every man who served him in England overpaid: another was that, while employments were

and they hold that ministers who preached against Deism "were guilty of a useless waste of precious time" (*History of Dissenters*, iv. p. 263). But Unitarianism was common among the Presbyterians. Priestley is a notable example.

vacant, he saved the salary: but the most prevalent of all was his never having the least inclination to oblige. I do not believe there ever lived a man to whose temper benevolence was so absolutely a stranger. . . . I remember Sir Robert Walpole saying once, in speaking to me of the King, that to talk with him of compassion, consideration of past services, charity, and bounty, was making use of words that with him had no meaning."¹ Yet, as a man, he was, in the main honest; and, as a King, in spite of great temptations to be otherwise, he was faithful to the duties of a constitutional sovereign. Bishop Butler, in his sermon on the King's Accession Day 1747, speaks of him as having been, "in the whole course of his reign, the guardian and protector" of "our constitution in Church and State." He knew how to be despotic in Germany, and yet keep within the limits of the constitution of England; and, in order to do this, he often surrendered his own strong likes and dislikes. It is true that he never knew how to yield graciously; but, after forcibly expressing his intense disgust—often in brutal language—he yielded without evasion or reserve. Chatham said of him that, "among many other royal virtues," he had "justice, truth, and sincerity in an eminent degree." In his reign of thirty-three years the dynasty became secure, and England was prosperous in peace and glorious in war; and it was his loyalty to the constitution which helped to bring this to pass. He was intelligent in business, and took pleasure in transacting it well. His regularity in ordering his time almost amounted to a mania; and his precision in keeping his private accounts was quite a mania. He did not see that one can waste much time in seeking exactness about small sums. As to his outrageous failings as a son, a husband, and a parent, it is some excuse for him that in

¹ *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*, i. p. 289. See W. H. Craig, *Life of Lord Chesterfield*, pp. 86-88.

all three particulars he was following the bad traditions of his family; and that, as regards the infidelities to his wife, he was acting as people in his position were, in that age, expected to act. His wife not only knew all about them, but was frequently consulted by him respecting these affairs. The relations between this King and Queen are among the most extraordinary in history. She knew his faults to the full, and her devotion to him was such that she condoned them all; not simply in order to get her own way, but out of the great love that she bore him. To what extent he was aware how she and Walpole managed him, and got him round from his own views to theirs, is uncertain. No doubt he was sometimes hoodwinked; but he knew and admired the superior abilities of his wife, and in his surly and ungracious way would pretend that her view, which she made a show of surrendering, had been his all along.¹

In few things did Queen Caroline take a keener interest than in matters of religion. It would be difficult to say what she believed.² She was a Theist, and she certainly did not accept the doctrines of the English Church. But she conformed to it, attended its services, and did her best for it with great zeal and ability. At her parties she sometimes had prayers and even a sermon, while people talked, if they pleased. During services in the royal chapel she talked politics with the King. She secretly managed a great deal of the Crown patronage, and used it to en-

¹ It was the popular belief that it was the Queen who really managed affairs.

"You may strut, dapper George, but 'twill all be in vain;
We know 'tis Queen Caroline, not you that reign."

But, "if anything is certain in all the coarse and dreary story of that Court, it is that Queen Caroline adored her husband."—(Justin McCarthy, *Four Georges*, ii. p. 101.)

² Lord Chesterfield said that "she fixed ultimately in Deism, believing in a future state." She probably was eclectic and indefinite; but she was in earnest, and liked the company of earnest believers in any creed.

courage thoughtful, liberal-minded, and cultivated men. Her share in the promotion of Berkeley and Butler would have sufficed to rescue her from oblivion, if she had done nothing else. She also supported Floodly, whom the King could not abide. And she respected goodness as well as ability, and would have promoted Wilson of Sodor and Man, if he would have accepted promotion, although he was not at all of her way of thinking in politics or religion. It was owing to her influence that, at Wake's death (February 1737), John Potter was sent from Oxford to Canterbury. He was the rare combination, a Whig and a High Churchman. He was a patristic scholar¹ and convinced of the essential unity of the English Church with that of the early Fathers. His resistance to all attempts at altering the formularies of the Church of England, and at making the terms of subscription easier, deserve praise, although his fulsome laudations of the Hanoverians provoke disgust. It was doubtless an evil that there were leading divines who maintained that a man might be an Arian or a Socinian, and yet sign the Anglican formularies and be a minister in the English Church; but it would have been a far greater evil to have had the formularies altered so as to admit Arians and Socinians. Potter gave no sanction to the lesser evil, and opposed the greater one.

But the chief security of the Church against fatal changes in the Prayer Book, with a view to comprehension of Dissenters both orthodox and otherwise, lay neither in the Bishops, many of whom would have welcomed such a

¹ We still use his edition of Clement of Alexandria (Oxford, 1715); and his *Discourse on Church Government* is still commended to candidates for Holy Orders. The Queen would have preferred Gibson to Potter, but this Walpole would not allow. She also helped the promotion of Hare, Secker, Sherlock, and Smalridge. She would have liked to promote Samuel Clarke, for she admired his piety and learning, and thought his Arianism no objection. But he himself refused to be made a Bishop.

surrender, nor in the main body of the clergy, but in the caution of statesmen, who cared little enough about any form of religion. They were resolved that what would be sure to cause a split among Churchmen should not be promoted. If the split came, one side would be sure to be against the Government and would weaken the Ministry. A little later Warburton wrote that, for this reason, "I can tell you of certain science, that not the least alteration will be made in the ecclesiastical system" (*Doddridge Correspondence*, v. 41). Still less could anything which might set almost all Churchmen against the Government be sanctioned. In 1730, the Dissenters wished to petition Parliament for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts.¹ They said that they had supported the English Constitution, without reward, for forty years, and now they merely asked for the removal of invidious distinctions between them and their fellow-subjects, some of whom were not as loyal as themselves. They had steadily supported the Protestant succession and the Whig party: and a Whig Government ought to see them righted. If the Tories came in at the next election, Dissenters could hope for no relief. Walpole would gladly have gratified them, but to do so would turn all the clergy into Tory agents at the next election. He thought that Hoadly, now Bishop of Salisbury, might persuade the Dissenters to wait till after the election. But he had offended Hoadly, by passing him over and sending Chandler (November 1730) to the wealthy See of Durham. So he got the Queen to ask Hoadly. Hoadly said that, if the Dissenters' petition reached the House of Lords, he must support it; but he would try to get them to wait. The Dissenters asked

¹ "This year (1730) there was a great deal of discoursing and writing about the decay of the Dissenting interest, and the occasion of it" (Calamy, *Own Life*, ii. p. 329). This discussion and the desire to petition were probably connected.

how long they were to wait, and tried to get Walpole to name a time. He tried to evade being definite; but they insisted on a plain answer. And then he had to say to them, as to Berkeley about the grant for Bermuda, that he did not believe that the time would ever come. But an Indemnity Act, freeing Dissenters from penalties for one year, was passed almost annually, and made the persecuting Acts for the time a dead letter. This the clergy and the Tories tolerated; but they would not have the Acts repealed.¹ Again, Walpole would gladly have amended the tithe Law, so as to spare the Quakers vexations and needless suffering. The Quaker's conscience did not allow him to pay tithe, except on compulsion; but he asked for some milder form of compulsion than that of being sent to prison, where he might die of gaol-fever. Walpole was no persecutor; he was wholly on the side of toleration; and the Bill passed the Commons by 164 to 43. But it was thrown out in the Lords by 54 to 35, fifteen bishops voting against it. This failure of the Quakers' Bill had one permanent effect; it destroyed the influence of Gibson, Bishop of London (1723-48), with Walpole. Previously to this Gibson's influence had been so great that someone said to Walpole: "Gibson is your Pope." "Yes," said the minister, "and a very good Pope too." But he was so disgusted at his Pope's opposition to the Quakers' Bill, that he dropped him. He asked what the Bishops meant "by trying to revive the long-deadened spirit of Church quarrels in the nation, and by sounding these false alarms among the clergy of injury designed them, to put the whole kingdom in a ferment." The King, with his usual

¹Although Walpole had told the Dissenters that, if they persisted, he must oppose the Bill, and Lord Chancellor Talbot, the Speaker Onslow, and others had given them similar warning, they persisted. The repeal was proposed by Mr Plummer, 12th March 1736, and negatived by 251 to 123.

delicacy of language about people whom he disliked, called the Bishops "a parcel of black canting, hypocritical rascals . . . giving themselves these impertinent airs in opposing everything that did not exactly suit their silly opinions." In his *Memoirs* (ii. pp. 87-98), Lord Hervey tells us that the Bishops had to listen to some very severe criticisms upon themselves from the Duke of Argyll, Chief Justice Hardwicke, and himself. The two Archbishops did not vote.

It was probably in 1736 that Queen Caroline asked Archbishop Blackburne of York, what had become of Dr Butler: was he dead? "No, Madam," was the ready reply, "but he is buried." Since 1725 Butler had been rector of Stanhope in the wilds of the county of Durham. In 1733 Lord Talbot, now become Lord Chancellor, made Butler his chaplain, and as such Butler sometimes came up to London from Stanhope. But these visits to the metropolis seem to have been so rare and so brief that the Queen never heard of Butler's being there. But now, July 1736, she made him Clerk of the Closet; and it was perhaps his schoolfellow and lifelong friend Secker, who brought this about. She quickly became intimate with him, being charmed both with his character and his philosophical power. In the same month as he was made Clerk of the Closet by the Queen he was made by Lord Talbot, a prebendary of Rochester; but he resigned both this stall and the rich living of Stanhope in 1740. It was in March 1737 that John Byrom had an interesting argument with him, Byrom upholding the supremacy of authority, and Butler that of reason. Byrom wished he had "Dr Butler's temper and calmness." "The Dr talked with much mildness." The Advertisement prefixed by Butler to the first edition of the *Analogy* is dated May 1736, a month or two before he became Clerk of the Closet. Therefore the

hypothesis that the *Analogy* is the outcome of philosophical discussions at the Queen's parties is not very tenable. She must have had an early copy, for she told George Sale, the translator of the Koran, who died 12th November 1736, that she read the *Analogy* every day at breakfast. She had been out of health for a long time, and in November 1737 was on her death-bed, owing to a rupture which she had concealed for years. And now we have a painful, but very characteristic scene. People wondered that the Queen did not have anyone to pray with her. To stop these remarks, Robert Walpole asked the Princess Emily to suggest to the Queen that Archbishop Potter should be sent for. The Princess hesitated. Then, although about a dozen persons were present, Walpole added: "Pray, Madam, let this farce be played; the Archbishop will act it very well. You may bid him be as short as you will. It will do the Queen no hurt, no more than any good; and it will satisfy all the good and wise fools, who will call us all atheists, if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are." The Archbishop was sent for, and came every morning and evening. The Queen desired him to take care of her Clerk of the Closet, Dr Butler. She declined the Holy Communion, and died on Sunday, 20th November, about 10 p.m. Her last word was, "Pray." When the Archbishop came out, people were eager to know whether the Queen had received the Sacrament. He replied that she was in a most heavenly state of mind. Next year Butler was offered the See of Bristol, which was very poor. His curious letter of acceptance illustrates his own honesty and the prosaic character of the age. He makes no pretence of believing that the Queen's wishes respecting him have been carried out.

The King's grief was morbid and extravagant, but genuine. It triumphed over his habitual illiberality. The Queen had always been profuse in her benefactions, as the

newspapers of the time show. Most of her large income was spent on others. She would give £1000, or even £5000, to benevolent objects. And she would also grant pensions out of her private purse. When she was dead, it was found that these amounted to nearly £13,000 a year. The King undertook to pay them all; "I will have no one the poorer for her death but myself," he said. And, until places could be found for them, he paid the salaries of all the members of her household. She was buried with much pomp in Henry VII.'s Chapel, provision being made that her husband should be placed at her side, with no partition between the two bodies. Handel composed an anthem for her funeral, "The ways of Zion do mourn, and she is in bitterness," which was sung again in the Abbey at the memorial service for Queen Victoria.¹

¹ It is painful to add that, even when she was on her death-bed, even while she was lying unburied, even after the grave had closed upon her, the foulest and most revolting verses were being written about her by her political or social enemies. And these abominable slanders were the production, not of the unknown reptiles of a gutter Press, but of some of the leading writers and wits of the time. In those days there was no limit to the venom or coarseness of interested invective. Did anyone believe it? Or was it all discounted as partisan mendacity?

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE DEATH OF QUEEN CAROLINE IN 1737 TO
THE DEATH OF GEORGE II. IN 1760

QUEEN Caroline was deeply lamented by many in all classes of society. A couplet went the round of London :—

Oh, cruel Death ! why hast thou been so unkind
To take our Queen, and leave our King behind ?

If only because of her influence over him, her decease was a loss to the nation. After she was gone, the relations between the King and his eldest son became even worse than they had been before. Not that she had made matters much better : the Prince of Wales perhaps detested his mother even more than he detested his father. But she sometimes kept the King from some scandalous outbreak against his son. That she had not seen the Prince during her last illness was eagerly seized upon by the Opposition, which had had the Prince as its leader since 1735. Chesterfield and Pope stooped to pour their sarcasm upon the memory of the dead Queen.

It is from about this point, if one may venture to fix one, that the corruption, which is so frequently charged against both the Church and society in the eighteenth century, becomes rapid. There had been plenty of it before,¹ and it had increased during the last twenty years ; but now the descent from bad to worse takes place with augmented

¹ See Steele's sketch in *The Spectator*, No. 154, 1711, and Swift's in *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*, 1709.

velocity.¹ Even Lord Chesterfield is found lamenting the general immorality. In his famous speech in 1737 against licensing the stage, he admits that the charge of licentiousness in dramas is true; and he goes on to say: "When we complain of the licentiousness of the stage, I fear we have more reason to complain of a general decay of virtue and morality among the people." The amusements which were fashionable reveal a great deal; bull-baiting, bear-baiting, etc. (Steele in the *Guardian*, No. 61), cock-throwing on Shrove Tuesday (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1737). The Gin Act, which Queen Caroline had helped to get passed in 1736, greatly raised the duty on gin; and it was hoped that the increased price would greatly lessen the consumption. But the determination to evade the Act was so general, and the encouragement which it gave to the professional informer was so great, that in 1743 it had to be repealed. An informer accused Wesley of selling gin without a licence! The witty suggestion of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, that a Bill was being prepared, "to have 'not' taken out of the Commandments and inserted in the Creed,"² was based on her own experience that "honour, virtue, and reputation, which we used to hear of in our nursery, are as much laid aside as crumpled

¹ One sign of this may be seen in the steady fall in the view taken by both women and men of woman's true function in society. The ideal of Pericles (Thuc. ii. 45), not to be talked about for good or evil, is the highest aimed at. She must not be learned or witty, but content herself with domestic matters and pretty feminine amusements. Swift and Pope have not come down to this view; and Johnson surprises Boswell by maintaining, "contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned." The common notion was that of Johnson's friend, Miss Frances Reynolds, who in her *Essay on Taste* (1784) says: "Perhaps the most perfect feminine mind habitually aims at nothing higher than an exemption from blame." Nearly a century earlier (1692), Defoe had written very differently on *The Education of Women*: "I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it."

² In our own time this witticism has been attributed to Archbishop Magee. It recalls Boileau's *bon mot* on the Jesuits, that they had lengthened the creed and shortened the decalogue.

ribbons" (Letter to the Countess of Mar, 1723). In the Advertisement to the *Analogy* (May 1736) Butler gives his testimony to the infidelity and corruption of the age, as Berkeley had done in 1721. In 1747, on the death of Archbishop Potter (10th October), Butler is *said* to have refused the Primacy, because he regarded the condition of the English Church as hopeless; "it was too late for him to try to support a failing Church." He may have refused the Primacy, but it can hardly have been for that reason, for that very year, in preaching on the King's Accession Day (11th June), he pointed out the value of the English Church, as a religious establishment helping to keep up a sense of real Christianity in the nation, and as a security against "that great corruption of Christianity, popery, which is ever hard at work to bring us again under its yoke." In a similar way, the loyalty of the King to the constitution is a blessing "securing us from that Pretender to his crown, whom we had almost forgot, till our late danger renewed our apprehension."¹ In his Charge to the Durham clergy (1751) Butler iterates his gloomy views respecting the irreligion of the age, as his friend Secker had done in a Charge in 1738.

Side by side with the evidence of this despondent clerical philosopher we have that of the lay philosopher, Hartley. In his *Observations on Man* (1749) he points out six evils which are likely to lead to the dissolution of "the present States of Christendom." 1. Growth of infidelity, especially among the governing class.² 2. Unblushing lewdness of both sexes, especially in the

¹ This was written the year after the Battle of Culloden, in which the Young Pretender was utterly defeated, 16th April 1746.

² See John Byrom to Phebe Byrom, 18th February 1729. In 1753 Sir John Barnard exclaimed in Parliament: "At present it really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion." Mr Tinsel, in Addison's comedy of *The Drummer*, professes infidelity "to show his parts." The poet Gray says of himself: "No very great wit, he believed in God"

high ranks of life. 3. Sordid self-interest as almost the sole motive of action, especially among politicians. 4. Contempt of all authority, divine or human, especially in the lower classes. 5. Gross neglect of duty by the worldly-minded clergy. 6. General carelessness about education, and consequent corruption of the young. With regard to the fifth item, Archdeacon Blackburne wrote in 1754: "The collective body of clergy, excepting a very inconsiderable number, consists of men whose lives and occupations are most foreign to their profession,¹—courtiers, politicians, lawyers, merchants, usurers, civil magistrates, sportsmen, musicians, stewards of country squires, tools of men in power, and even companions of rakes and infidels, not to mention the ignorant herd of poor curates to whom the instruction of common people is committed, who are accordingly, in religious matters, the most ignorant common people who are in any Protestant, not to say in any Christian society upon the face of the earth." Let us admit that Blackburne was prejudiced against the ordinary parson, yet his testimony could be confirmed from episcopal charges and from the writings of Wesley. Montesquieu says that in France he was blamed for having too little religion, but in England for having too much. In fact, "there is no such thing as religion in England." As already pointed out, the prose of the Essayists, especially Addison, Steele, and Johnson, manifests an evident desire to remedy this deplorable condition of things; in them the contest between good taste and vicious fashion is frequent and conspicuous.

¹ John Brown, in his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), says of those clergy who mixed with the world: "It is grown a fashionable thing, among these Gentlemen, to despise the Duties of their Parish; to wander about, as the various Seasons invite, to every Scene of false Gaiety; to frequent and shine in all public Places, their own Pulpits excepted" (p. 85). See also *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., p. 32; Massey, *Reign of George III.*, ch. xiv.

The same may be said of the couplets of Pope and other versifiers, and also of the drawings of Hogarth,

Whose pictur'd Morals charm the Mind,
And through the Eye correct the Heart.¹

But so long as fashion was on the side of vice, mere good taste was but a feeble support to virtue.² It needed something stronger than culture to bring about a widespread reform of society. It was after literature and art had failed to do more than prepare the way, that the Religious Revival had a real success. But the greatness of its success cannot be entirely accounted for by the fact that it was a religious and not an aesthetic movement. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the gloomy pictures drawn by Berkeley, Butler, and Blackburne, and by Chesterfield, Hartley, and others, if true to life, are not the whole of the truth. The heart of the nation was not hopelessly corrupt. The rapid developments which took place in a variety of not unhealthy directions is evidence of that. Hallam regards the thirty years that followed the Peace of Utrecht (1714) as "the most prosperous season that England had ever experienced," during which "progression, though slow, was uniform." There was plenty of energy in politics and commerce; and the extraordinary rapidity with which Wesley and Whitefield found followers and fellow-workers is evidence of the real craving for reform in the classes to which they appealed. Evidently there was widespread recognition of the existence of great social evils; and as soon as reformers appeared, who proved that they had the energy and ability to grapple with the evils, they were welcomed and given the en-

¹ Garrick's epitaph on Hogarth's monument in Chiswick churchyard.

² Swift points out that reform "is not to be accomplished any other way than by introducing religion as much as possible to be the turn and fashion of the age."—(*A Project for the Advancement of Religion.*)

couragement of success. The orthodox divines had been very successful, in defending the truths of revelation from the attacks of the Deists, and in turning men's minds from scoffing to seriousness. But the reformers that followed them were still more successful, in translating these truths into principles of life, and in turning men's hearts from vice to righteousness.

The Methodist movement began in Oxford among a few undergraduates in 1729, and continued there, ridiculed and persecuted, till 1735. By 1738, after John Wesley had returned from Herrnhut and Whitefield from Georgia, the chief features of the movement were already determined, and Methodist societies became common. They were at once a revival, a continuation, and a new product. They were partly a revival of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners which had sprung up after the Revolution; partly a continuation of the Oxford Society; partly the product of Moravian influence. The object of each Methodist society was to promote holiness of life, to make itself the centre of a stricter discipline and a more fervent piety than could be found in the Church at large. The love-feasts of the primitive Christians were imitated, and whole nights were sometimes spent in prayer. Not only so, but the injunction, "Confess your sins one to another" (James v. 16), was literally fulfilled. At each meeting the members were expected to answer such questions as these: What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met with? How were you delivered? What have you thought, said, or done, which you doubt whether it be sin or not? It is obvious that voluntary submission to an Inquisition of this kind could not have continued without the support of a fervent zeal which consumed all natural repugnance. Here again is

an element taken from primitive Christianity,—the working of a great enthusiasm.

It was significant that Wesley's 'conversion' (24th May 1738) was the result of Moravian influence. The organization, which he made so perfect among his followers, may have been suggested by that of the Religious Societies in the seventeenth century, which were supported exclusively by members of the English Church, or from the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, to which Dissenters often belonged;¹ but, in Wesley's hands, this organization derived its inspiration, not from the Church of England, but from a foreign source, the enthusiasm of the Moravian minister Peter Boehler, who for a while had extraordinary influence over him. But the Moravian ascendancy was not to be very long-lived.

It was in February 1739 that Whitefield began the practice of field-preaching, and thus made himself accessible to everyone. And it was in May 1739 that Wesley founded the first Methodist chapel, and thus began his permanent organization. Up to this point Methodism had been a branch of Moravianism: for Moravianism had absorbed the Oxford Methodists.² Now it became an independent movement, and in some things was opposed to Moravianism. Wesley was excluded from the Moravian

¹ J. Woodward, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Religious Societies*, 1701, p. 64. Wesley, indirectly, had a good deal to do with the extinction of these Religious Societies. Men who would have joined them became Methodists. One of their last annual meetings at Bow Church was in 1738, where the preacher, Dr William Berriman, Fellow of Eton, warned the members against being led astray by the vagaries of Whitefield. Thus a stream of religious energy, which had hitherto quickened Church life, was partly drawn away from the Church, and partly dried up in the arid times of George I. and II. See C. F. Secretan, *Life and Times of the Pious Robert Nelson*.

² In his Journal, Wesley speaks of the Moravian Society as "our Society," not that he had joined them as a sect, but that he regarded their aims as similar to his own; he could work with them. Later he found that he could not do so.—(Southey, *Life of Wesley*, ch. x.)

pulpit in Fetter Lane; and in July 1740 he formed a new centre at a place called the Foundry.

Wesley's powers as an organizer have not often been surpassed.¹ The material with which he had to deal was so unpromising. He had to drill multitudes of teachers, many of them very ignorant, and all of them without experience of any habits of obedience. These men were moved by an enthusiasm which at times was little short of religious mania; and each one of them believed that he was inspired. Wesley produced an organization, which was not only able to keep in order these unruly zealots, but which continued to work satisfactorily after the original fervour had abated. Wesley's personal sympathy, tact, and strong will no doubt had a great deal to do with the success of his system during his lifetime: but that it has continued to work so well, after his magnetic personality has long since been forgotten, is evidence of real administrative genius in the originator of it.²

If the Moravian source of John Wesley's inspiration was significant, no less significant was the relation in which Whitefield stood to the Church of England. He was in Anglican Orders, having been ordained deacon in 1736 and priest in 1739; he accepted the Articles, and was attached to the Prayer Book. "God is my judge," he says, "I should rejoice to see all the world adhere to the Articles; I should rejoice to see all the ministers of the Church of England preach up those very Articles

¹ Macaulay says that Wesley had "a genius for government not inferior to Richelieu." But we must add with Matthew Arnold, that he had also "a genius for godliness"; and with Lecky, that the religious change introduced by the Wesleys are "of greater historic importance than all the splendid victories won under Pitt."

² For details of the organization see Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, i. pp. 400 ff.

they have subscribed to. My dear brethren, I am a friend to her Articles, I am a friend to her Homilies, I am a friend to her Liturgy; and, if they did not thrust me out of their churches, I would read them every day."¹ But he placed himself outside all episcopal control. He does not seem to have considered episcopal ordination necessary or preferable to any other form. He never took part in presbyterian ordination or declared his preference for it; but he never expressed any disapproval of it. On the contrary, by being present on several occasions of the kind, he may be held to have approved of non-episcopal ordination. Perhaps he thought that it depended upon circumstances which form was best. But there can be no doubt about his views respecting episcopal jurisdiction. He preached in Dissenting chapels, communicated with Dissenters, and declared that ecclesiastical systems and schisms were matters of indifference. His business was to preach the leading truths of the Gospel, in order to save souls. No particular form of Church government was commanded by God. He valued churches just in proportion as they aided him in making known the truth that saves. "If the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein." When an English Bishop remonstrated with him on the irregularity of his proceedings, he replied that he had never deviated from the doctrines of the English Church, and yet he had been excluded from nearly all its pulpits. When he was bringing even the Dissenters themselves to crowd the churches, he was denied the use of the churches for no other reason than that he had too many followers. So he went to meeting-houses or into the fields, that he might impart to hungry souls the bread of life. "As good is done, and souls are

¹ Philip, *Life and Times of Whitefield*, p. 586.

benefited, I hope your Lordship will not regard a little irregularity, since, at the worst, it is only the irregularity of doing well."¹

This was characteristic of the whole Methodist movement. Other Anglican clergy took the same course that Whitefield did. They maintained Anglican doctrine, and had no objection to the Anglican Liturgy; but they became Dissenters for the sake of freedom of ministration. Had the English Church been as elastic as the Roman Church in such things, the Methodist movement would not have produced these secessions. The question of lay preachers was of a similar kind. The want of elasticity in the Church with regard to the employment of zealous laymen in evangelistic work made the institution of lay preachers tell in the direction of schism. It was in 1741 that Wesley took the step of organizing laymen as regular preachers. He is said to have done this very reluctantly, and under the strong influence of his mother, who had very decided views, and was not afraid of acting upon them. With its lay preachers the movement became independent of the Established Church; and it was easy for independence to pass into opposition. To the very end, Wesley seems to have meant his organization to supplement that of the Church, not to oppose it. In the last years of his life he wrote: "I live and die a member of the Church of England, and no one who regards my judgment or advice will ever separate from it." But circumstances were too strong for him. His lay preachers, free from all episcopal control, were sure to come into collision with the parochial clergy, whose shortcomings

¹ In 1739 the Press was very busy in attacking Methodism in articles, letters, and pamphlets. Most of these attacks were made upon Whitefield, who occasionally replied; and Wesley also answered one or two. Mr R. Green has made a study of these productions in *Anti-Methodist Publications in the Eighteenth Century*, 1902.

they sometimes publicly censured. At first, it was the rule that Methodist services should not be held at the same time as services in the Parish Church. But gradually the rule was forgotten: Wesley allowed certain exceptions; and after his death it was deliberately ignored. Then some of the lay preachers, without Wesley's consent, took to administering the Holy Communion. This provoked retaliation. Were the Methodists Dissenters or not? If they were not, they must obey the officers of the Church. If they refused to obey, they must get their meeting-houses licensed under the Toleration Act, and then their legal status would be that of Dissenters. This began as early as 1760 in Norwich. In 1787, Wesley regretfully took out such licences for the whole body of Methodists. In 1781, Lady Huntingdon's chapels were declared to be Dissenting meeting-houses, in which no minister of the Church of England might officiate. But the Methodists were as yet very indignant at being called Dissenters, and the English Dissenters gave them little sympathy.

The upper classes were, as a rule, supercilious towards Methodism, if not actually antagonistic. Although Oxford had been the cradle of the movement, the University remained bitterly hostile to it. In 1740, a student named Graves was refused testimonials until he consented to renounce Methodism.¹ In 1768, the Vice-Chancellor expelled six students from St Edmund Hall for Methodism. Among the charges against them were, that they had consorted with persons reputed to be Methodists, had preached in a barn to a mixed multitude, and had talked of "drawing nigh to God" and of "sitting down

¹ Similar things took place at Cambridge. In September 1738, Gray writes to Richard West: "The University has published a severe edict against schismatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little proctorlings to see its orders executed."

and waiting for the Spirit." Erasmus Middleton was also charged with having officiated in a chapel-of-ease, at Cheveley in Berkshire. Whitefield's defence of them probably did them no good; and on 12th March Dr Durell expelled them. It is distressing to find Dr Johnson defending this harshness in such terms as these: "Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at an University, who are not willing to be taught, but will presume to teach? Where is religion to be taught but at an University? I believe they might be good beings, but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field, but we turn her out of a garden."¹ The best defence of the University authorities is, that these students admitted that they had attended conventicles, which was forbidden by the statutes.² Erasmus Middleton was the author of *Biographia Evangelica* and became rector of Turvey.

Till near the end of the century, there were few Bishops who did not, in their Charges, condemn Methodism; and it was often clear that 'Methodists' meant all who held Evangelical views. Clergy were sometimes suspended for Methodism. The poet Gray mentions that one of the brothers of Earl Ferrers, whom the Earl summoned as a witness to prove that he was insane when he shot Mr Johnson, had been "suspended for Methodism by the Bp. of London," Sherlock.³ But Wesley declared Lowth, Bishop of London (1777-87), to be, in his "whole behaviour, worthy of a Christian Bishop": and Bishop Porteus (1787-1808) was also a partial exception. He was an admirer of Hannah More, favoured her projects, and

¹ Boswell, 1772.

² *Studies in Oxford History* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), p. 297. Dr Dixon, Principal of the Hall, attested the excellent conduct of these six students. Dr Horne, President of Magdalen, protested against the sentence.

³ *Letter to Thomas Wharton*, 22nd April 1760.

supported various agencies which were dear to Evangelicals. Bishop Benson was kind to Whitefield. Archbishop Potter also was friendly to both the Methodists and the Moravians. But such sympathy among the Bishops was rare. Randolph, the successor of Porteus, had none of it: he opposed every kind of Methodism. Casual references in leading writers of the time—Pope, Johnson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne—show that remarks and jokes against the Methodists were appreciated by the reading portion of society. Graves, rector of Claverton, near Bath, a friend of Pope and Warburton, attacked the Methodists in a novel called *The Spiritual Quixote*, the heroes of which are two itinerant preachers called Tagwell and Wildgoose.¹ Lady Huntingdon is a great fact on the other side. Her influence was considerable, and a few of the aristocracy were induced to favour the Methodists. Among these were Lord Barham, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lord Buchan, Erskine's brother. But the Countess induced many of the nobility to come and listen to the Methodists in London, Bath, and elsewhere; e.g. Frederick, Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Chatham, Lord Hervey, the Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Suffolk, the Duchess of Buckingham, and many more. In the chapel at Bath there was a part screened off, called "Nicodemus's corner," to which even Bishops would come and hear without being seen. But the effect on these listeners was not always what Lady Huntingdon desired. Lady Suffolk, believing that some of Whitefield's words were aimed at her, broke off her friendship with the Countess. The Duchess of Buckingham wrote to the

¹ Barbeau, *Life and Letters at Bath in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 165. It was in 1748 that Lady Huntingdon met Whitefield and made him her chaplain. For Chesterfield's and Bolingbroke's civility to him see Philip, *Life and Times of Whitefield*, p. 353. Bolingbroke "sat like an Archbishop, and was pleased to say I had done great justice to the divine attributes in my discourse."

Countess: "I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers. Their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding." However, in some circles, Methodism became more or less the fashion. In May 1749, Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann: "You must prepare yourself with Methodism. This sect increases as fast as almost ever any religious nonsense did." In 1766 Walpole heard Wesley preach. He wrote to John Chute (10th October) that Wesley was "as evidently an actor as Garrick. He spoke his sermon, but so fast, and with so little accent, that I am sure he has often uttered it, for it was like a lesson. There were parts and eloquence in it; but towards the end he exalted his voice, and acted very ugly enthusiasm; decried learning, and told stories like Latimer. . . . The congregation was very mean." A little later (16th April 1768) Horace Walpole writes to Rev. W. Cole about Whitefield: "That arch-rogue preached lately a funeral sermon on one Gibson, hanged for forgery, and told his audience that he could assure them Gibson was now in heaven, and that another fellow, executed at the same time, had the happiness of touching Gibson's coat as he was turned off. . . . I don't desire a reign of fanatics. Oxford has begun with these rascals, and I hope Cambridge will wake. I don't mean that I would have them persecuted, which is what they wish; but I would have the clergy fight them and ridicule them." Unfortunately, the

clergy were sometimes not above egging on the mob to pelt the preachers.

The preaching of Whitefield and Wesley was part of the reaction against the cold appeal to reason which had been made in the Deistical controversy. They preached the old Puritan doctrine of conversion, and in moving language implored each one of their hearers to drop all other concerns and simply realize the wrath and the mercy of God. They appealed to the imagination and the emotions. But Walpole lacked discernment in characterizing Wesley as an actor. Wesley had not only taste but logic. The reasoning in his sermons was sometimes very impressive; yet even he aimed, not so much at quickening men's understandings, as at making them feel. Whitefield did not care to argue. He was a born actor, gifted with all the confidence of a prophet.¹ With gestures exquisite in their grace and appropriateness, and in tones thrilling in their energy and earnestness, he made the most momentous assertions with an air of absolute conviction. The vividness of the acting could impress even a Lord Chesterfield at the moment, but there was not very much for an educated person to carry away and meditate upon.²

In short, as Lecky says, the Methodist preached to the nerves. He insisted that an innocent and useful life, with orthodox belief and regular attendance at public worship,

¹ Johnson would not allow much merit to Whitefield's oratory. "His popularity, Sir, is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner" (Boswell, 1769). For a more sympathetic appreciation of his powers, see Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, pp. 386, 387.

² For many years Whitefield preached forty hours every week, sometimes more. What time was there for study or thought? He travelled much on both sides of the Atlantic. Hardly a trace of what he must have seen appears in his sermons. Neither strange customs, nor wonders of nature or of art, seem to have impressed him or set him thinking. It should be remembered that he often preached the same sermon three or four dozen times, each time improving in delivery.

was quite unable to save men from everlasting torture. With every artifice that could make his appeal more dramatic, he dwelt upon the certainty of death, the terrors of judgment, and the undying agonies of hell, until he scared his hearers to the verge of madness. A nervous disease, which, rapidly passed through the congregation, produced violent trembling, or convulsions, or shrieks, or total insensibility, sometimes lasting for hours. A system more fitted to unhinge weak intellects, and, wring with anguish sensitive natures, has not often been devised. Some of the victims believed that they were possessed by demons, a delusion which would last for days.¹ Whitefield himself came to see the mischief of this. "I have been too bitter in my zeal. Wildfire has been mixed with it, and I find that I frequently wrote and spoke in my own spirit, when I thought it was by the assistance of the Spirit of God." Wesley says much the same. His zeal has outrun knowledge and prudence. "I would willingly have none of my wildfire mingled with the sacred fire that comes from God's altar." But their ignorant and fanatical followers lacked the salutary checks on their extravagant language. As Dr Stoughton remarks of the early Methodist preachers, "one of the first things noticeable, is the singularly excitable temperament of some amongst them—a fact which accounts for much of the extravagance with which they are charged."

The Methodist movement gave impetus to many superstitions, such as casting lots and opening Bibles at random to obtain Divine guidance. Coincidences were miracles, either from heaven or from hell. Every adverse circum-

¹ Lecky, *Eighteenth Century*, ii. p. 582. But Wesley himself seldom appealed to the terror of eternal punishment. See Winchester, *Life of John Wesley*, p. 121; he says: "Seldom or never has a great popular religious reform, so widespread and so searching, been more free from unwholesome teaching and unwholesome stimulus" (p. 213).

stance was attributed to the hostility of Satan; every favourable one was a supernatural sign of God's approval. Wesley firmly believed in such things, and encouraged a belief in them; although he afterwards disapproved of casting lots. The year 1750 raised superstition to the wildest pitch. In January there was *Aurora Borealis*; the whole heaven seemed to be in flames. On the 8th of February and of March there were earthquake shocks in London. That they came on the same day of the month was regarded as highly significant. A crazy soldier predicted that on the 8th of April, London and Westminster would be destroyed. This produced a frantic panic. Horace Walpole says that in three days 750 coaches of persons flying from London were counted at Hyde Park Corner.¹ Women who could not fly provided "earthquake gowns," in which to pass the night in the open air. On the evening of the predicted day people ran in frenzy through the streets, churches and meeting-houses were thronged, Charles Wesley preached for hours. Towards midnight Whitefield began to preach in the middle of Hyde Park, and terrified his hearers with declarations of the judgments of God. Day dawned, without any shock being perceived; and London went back to its usual habits.

It was on the intellectual side that Methodism was weak. The preachers seldom gained any hold on the educated classes. The preacher's ignorance was sometimes glaring. But, in any case, cultivated people were

¹ His remarks are characteristic. He wrote to Sir H. Mann, and April 1750: "There has been a shower of sermons and exhortations: Secker, the Jesuitical Bishop of Oxford, set the mode. He heard the women were all going out of town to avoid the next shock: and so, for fear of losing his Easter offerings, he set himself to advise them to await God's good pleasure in fear and trembling. But, what is more astonishing, Sherlock, who has much better sense and much less of the Popish confessor, has been running a race with him for the old ladies, and has written a pastoral letter of which ten thousand were sold in three days."

disgusted by his groans and amatory exclamations, and were shocked by the glib familiarity and audacious dogmatism with which he treated the most sacred and difficult subjects. The credulity and conceit with which he assumed that the whole course of nature was being continually rearranged for his convenience, provoked amazement and contempt, while his narrow views of life showed that even the practical element in his teaching was out of sympathy with the facts of society. In Dissent this want of culture had begun to show itself before the death of Queen Anne. A Dissenting historian laments that "the strictness of Puritanism, without its strength or its piety, was beginning to reign. Shakespeare's plays were forbidden writings, and Bacon was a 'profane' and unknown author. The *Spectator* was probably unknown to nine-tenths of the members of the Free Churches."¹ The author of *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 1730, who himself joined the Church, says that the want of culture in the ministers was one of the causes. Except in hymn-writing, the Methodists have left little sign of literary powers.²

The educated man's dislike of the Methodists, because of their fanaticism and ignorance, was reasonable. But there was one charge brought against the Methodists which was not reasonable, and which to us seems to be absurd. They were frequently accused of Popery; and the preachers were frequently interrupted with cries of "Popery, Popery." Wesley, like Bishop Butler, was accused of being a Papist; and once, when all Papists were requested to leave London, Wesley postponed his departure, to avoid seeming to admit that he was a Romanist.

¹ Skeats, p. 247.

² In the minutes of the Methodist Conference, May 1765, occurs this entry: "Do not our people in general talk too much and read too little? They do."

The explanation of this is twofold. First, Romanism was at that time so detested in itself, and so dreaded in connexion with Jacobite plots, that 'Papist' was one of the most opprobrious epithets that could be given to an obnoxious person.¹ Secondly, there was real resemblance between the two. The Wesleyans, like the Romanists, were a religious body professing and advocating a special discipline. They met for worship in private, as Papists did; they advocated fasting and other forms of asceticism; and they practised confession. Both bodies possessed a strong religious organization, which was outside the National Church. It was not so very extraordinary that Wesley and his followers were sometimes confounded with Romanists. Archdeacon Blackburne, who in 1752 had charged Butler with leanings towards Rome, a little later declared that the Methodists were secret Papists. George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter (1747-62), in his *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared* (1749-54), insists upon the resemblance: among the Bishops, he was one of the most strenuous opponents of Methodism. Bishop Newton, in his autobiography, speaks of Methodism as "a bastard kind of Popery." Warburton, on the one hand, sees an "exact resemblance" between Wesley's saints and those of the Church of Rome; on the other, he regards it as "the old Puritan fanaticism revived." Horace Walpole remarks that, "unless, as I apprehend, the Methodists are

¹ It is said that conversions to Rome were not uncommon then, although Gibbon is the only famous instance. The *Old Whig* newspaper (March 1735) stated that there were 10,000 Roman priests in London; *Common Sense* (1744) that 400 Romanists held public office. Bishop Sherlock wrote to his clergy in 1750: "There is a great and grievous evil among us; I mean the great increase of Popery in this kingdom." Charles Wesley represents the mob as saying:

"Old Wesley too, to Papists kind,
Who wrote against them for a blind,
Himself a Papist still in heart,
He and his followers shall smart."

secret Papists, Popery will not revive here." When fear of French invasion in support of the Pretender caused many loyal addresses to be sent to George II., Wesley thought that the Methodists had better send one. He drew up an address, in which he said: "In spite of all our remonstrances on that head, we are still traduced as inclined to Popery, and consequently disaffected to your Majesty." This was in 1744, but it was not sent. To these traducers Wesley said with pardonable vigour: "O ye fools, when will ye understand that the preaching of justification by faith alone is overturning Popery from its foundations?" Whitefield amusingly said: "If I am a Roman Catholic, the Pope must have given me a large dispensation." Whatever might be said of Wesley, Whitefield was far more of a Puritan than a Papist. "Thousands expressed their delight to see Puritanism revived by a minister of the Church of England."¹

At an early stage of his career, Wesley had parted from his teachers, the Moravians. By this time he had also parted from his disciple, Whitefield. It was what he called their 'mysticism' that caused him to leave the Moravians; and by 'mysticism' he meant slighting the means of grace. The Moravians thought little of sacraments, of fasting, or any form of self-denial; sometimes even of prayer. They aimed at perfect quiescence, emptying themselves of everything, that they might be the better receptacles of God's grace. Wesley had as great horror of this 'mysticism' as the Bishops had of Methodist 'enthusiasm.' "Mystics," he said, "are the most dangerous" enemies of Christianity; "they stab it in the vitals." He laid great stress on the use of all the means of grace,—frequent communion, public worship, study of Scripture, fasting, etc. This could not be reconciled with

¹ Bogue and Bennett, iii. p. 31.

the Moravian position; and Wesley left them.¹ He separated from Whitefield on the doctrine of predestination. Whitefield assured Wesley, at the time when he began to differ from him, that he had not read a page of Calvin; but he was Calvinistic in conviction, though he wished to avoid public contradiction of Wesley. "For Christ's sake, if possible, dear Sir, never speak against election in your sermons; no one can say that I *ever* mentioned it in public discourses, whatever my private sentiments may be. Nothing will so much prevent a division as your being silent on *that* head."² Wesley drew lots as to being silent; and the lot came, "preach and print"; and he did so. He said that the doctrine of predestination made God more unjust than the devil. The devil had never said that he wills all men to be saved, nor would he send millions to hell "for continuing in sin, which, for want of that grace which he will not give them, they cannot avoid." Thirty years later this controversy became much more acute;³ but already we have three bodies, Moravians, Wesleyan Methodists, and Calvinistic Methodists, very distinct in their tenets, if not yet distinct in organization.

It would be interesting to know whether there was any marked difference in the amount of unpopularity with which these three varieties of doctrine were received by the congregations which the respective preachers addressed. Apparently the Moravians were never unpopular; but they were neither very numerous nor very influential in

¹ W. H. Fitchett, *Wesley and his Century*, p. 79; Winchester, *Life of John Wesley*, p. 91.

² R. Philip, *Life and Times of Whitefield*, p. 198.

³ In 1769, Wesley summed up Toplady's Calvinism thus: "One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elected shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can."

England, and in the second half of the century they fell rather out of notice. But in the first half no external communion was more closely connected with the English Church. Archbishop Wake supported Zinzendorf's claim to the possession of a genuine Episcopacy. Archbishop Potter was keenly interested in Moravian work. Bishop Wilson was elected by them "Antecessor" of their General Synod and accepted the office of "Administrator." A Bill for more distinct recognition of Moravian ordination passed both Houses about 1749 and was warmly supported by Bishop Madox. "It will be an edification to the whole episcopal bench, and all true Protestants of England, if the British nation expresses itself in favour of the Brethren." Towards the end of the century interest in the Moravians was revived by the magnificent example which they set to all Christian Churches in missionary work. Both Wesley's followers and Whitefield's followers were unpopular with the educated classes because of their emotionalism and their want of culture.¹ Both were disliked by Churchmen because of their disregard of authority, and their supposed leanings, sometimes to Puritanism, which was partly true of Whitefield, sometimes to Romanism, which was a plausible charge against the Wesleys. And the Dissenters, who looked with satisfaction on the Puritan element in Methodism, joined with Churchmen in denouncing the suspected Popery. Whether Whitefield's Calvinism made his teaching less acceptable to uneducated multitudes, it would be hard to determine. But what caused Methodism

¹ In *The Mirror*, considered his best comedy, Foote ridiculed Whitefield and the Methodists, and the piece had a great run at the Haymarket in 1760. Compare the Methodist thief in Fielding's *Amelia*, and the Methodist footman in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*. Hume wrote to Gibbon, 18th March 1776: "Among many other marks of decline, the prevalence of superstition in England prognosticates the fall of philosophy and decay of taste."

of any kind to be disliked by the majority of English people of all classes was, that it made such a disturbance. The Methodists were turning the world upside down. Why could they not let things alone? The Church, at last free from its death-struggles with Presbyterianism on the one hand and Romanism on the other, had no wish to be harassed by an aggressive movement, avowedly in support of the Church, but quite fatal to the Church's repose. The world, absorbed in its money-making and its pleasures (refined or brutal as the case might be), did not care to have a Methodist preacher always coming on the scene, and dinning into its ears that these things led direct to the never-ending agonies of hell. During fifty years of ceaseless itinerant preaching Wesley devoted himself, and inspired others to devote themselves, to the awakening of the consciences of all who would listen. And people resent having their consciences awakened. If any one thing can be named as provoking hostility to Methodism, it is its audacious interference with the private lives of individuals.

This, to a large extent, was what was meant by the 'enthusiasm,' which was, throughout the century, regarded with such dislike, or even horror, by so many of the leading divines, philosophers, and statesmen. South (1634-1716), in one of his sermons, describes enthusiasm as "that pestilent and vile thing, which, wheresoever it has had its full course, has thrown both Church and State into confusion." Shaftesbury, in his *Characteristics* (1711), calls it "that greatest incendiary of the earth," which "overthrows established Churches, violates the most lawful rites, and, in a word, confounds all things divine and human." Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared* (1749) has been already mentioned. Bishop Hurd published a sermon on *The Mischiefs of Enthusiasm and*

Bigotry (1752). Lyttelton, in his *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760), says there is "no evil more to be feared than rancorous enthusiastic zeal." Johnson describes enthusiasm as "a vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication," and in his *Lives of the Poets* says that Langhorne's letters are "unhappily a little tinged with enthusiasm," but that Addison's religion "has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious." John Wesley, on Christian perfection, says that "enthusiasm naturally leads to Antinomianism"; John Newton, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of it as "a device of Satan to discredit the work of Gospel truth." Gibbon, in his *Memoirs*, says that William Law, "had not his vigorous mind been clouded by enthusiasm, might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times." Wilberforce, in his *Practical View* (1797), speaks of "doctrines of divine assistances disgraced by brainsick enthusiasts."

But to what are we to attribute the very large measure of success, which, in spite of the charges of Bishops, the denunciations of parochial clergy, the sneers of the educated, and the violence of the masses, Methodism certainly achieved? Three things stand out prominently.

1. The magnitude of the evils which called for reform.
2. The immense energy, courage, and persistence of the two great leaders, each of whom was gifted with an extraordinarily influential personality. These two things go a long way towards explaining the success at the time; but they do not explain the permanent effects of the movement upon the religious characters of thousands who never came under the magnetic influence of the leaders. To account for this we must look further.
3. There was the extreme simplicity,¹ and the limitless adaptability, of

¹ When Boswell spoke of the great success of the Methodists, Johnson said: "Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner,

the doctrines which were insisted upon. In ceaseless variety of form, and with boundless modes of illustration, the Methodists preached over and over again two simple doctrines. Sinful man needs, and can obtain, forgiveness: an immortal soul must live for ever in either bliss or misery. This teaching came home to millions of men and women, who knew that they were sinners in need of forgiveness, believed that they had souls that were immortal, and could follow the inferences which the preachers drew from these premises.

It will be convenient to mention here the chief leaders, preachers, and writers, who connect the Methodist movement, which was, in the main, independent of the English Church and outside it, with the Evangelical movement, which was inside it. The one became, not only outside the Church but antagonistic to it: having begun as a self-constituted and unwelcome ally, it became the critic, the rival, and at last the foe, of the Church, whose deficiencies it professed to remedy. The other remains, as a leaven and a school of thought, inside the Church, which it desires to reform in its own way. The two movements have, to a large extent, the same sources, and their streams of influence continually intermingle. But they are not identical, and in discussing the leading features of each it is well to keep them apart. Some of the Evangelicals who were at first known as "Serious Clergy," *i.e.* more serious than the ordinary Church-and-State men, were opposed to Wesley, although many sympathized with him. His High Church views were not liked, and his opposition to Calvinism was, in the eyes of some Evangelicals, fatal. Nevertheless, the Methodists and the Evangelicals were

which is the only way to do good to the common people and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations" (Boswell, 1763).

one in their aim at the conquest of irreligion and immorality.

It must never be forgotten that Wesley and Whitefield were clergymen of the Church of England, who had no desire to leave that Church or impugn its teaching. Among the Anglican clergy who had similar aims and zeal and did much for the cause of religion in England, may be mentioned :—Samuel Walker (1714-61), rector of Truro ; William Grimshaw (1708-63), incumbent of Haworth ; Augustus M. Toplady (1740-78), incumbent of Broad Hembury, author of "Rock of Ages" ; Thomas Adam (1701-84), incumbent of Winteringham ; Vincent Perronet (1693-1785), vicar of Shoreham ; John W. Fletcher (1729-1785), vicar of Madeley ; John Berridge (1716-93), incumbent of Everton ;¹ William Romaine (1714-95), preacher at St George's, Hanover Square ; Henry Venn (1725-97), rector of Yelling ; Joseph Milner (1744-97), vicar of North Ferriby, author of *The History of the Church of Christ* ; John Newton (1725-1807), incumbent of St Mary Woolnoth, London, author of *Cardiphonia* ; Richard Cecil (1748-1810), rector of All Saints, Lewes ; Thomas Robinson (1749-1813), vicar of St Mary's, Leicester ; Isaac Milner (1751-1820), Dean of Carlisle, brother of the historian ; Thomas Scott (1747-1821), rector of Aston Sandford, author of a Commentary on the Bible ; and Charles Simcoe (1758-

¹ It was Berridge who foretold the issue of the Methodist movement. He wrote to Lady Huntingdon : "What will become of your students at your removal? They are virtual Dissenters now, and will be settled Dissenters then. And the same will happen to many, perhaps most, of Wesley's preachers at his death" (*Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, ii. p. 423). Walker of Truro was of the same opinion ; he was not afraid that the Church would excommunicate Wesley, "but that he will excommunicate the Church." See the *Saturday Review*, 28th March 1891. Of Vincent Perronet Charles Wesley said that he was "the Archbishop of the Methodists," so frequently was he consulted. He unhappily advised John Wesley to marry Mrs Vazeille. For Henry Venn, see *Annals of a Clerical Family*, by John Venn, pp. 66-111.

1836), incumbent of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. It was of Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford that J. H. Newman wrote in 1864, at the beginning of the *Apologia*, that he was "the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul." Perhaps James Hervey (1714-58), incumbent of Weston Favell and Collingtree, and author of *Meditations among the Tombs* and of *Dialogues between Theron and Aspasie*, should be mentioned in the same company.

The *Meditations* were ridiculed by Johnson,¹ and the *Dialogues* were rather severely criticized by Wesley; but both were for a time very popular. Among less influential leaders and writers may be mentioned; Thomas Adam (1701-84), incumbent of Whittingham; Walter Shirley (1725-86), rector of Loughrea, a hymn-writer; Moses Browne (1704-87), vicar of Olney; Martin Madan (1726-90), chaplain of the Lock Hospital, author of *The lyphthora*; and Thomas Haweis (1734-1820), rector of Oldwinkle, and biographer of William Romaine. Although Rowland Hill began as a Churchman and received deacon's orders, yet he should perhaps be counted rather as a Dissenter, than as a clergyman of the English Church. But in the Surrey-street Chapel, of which he laid the first stone, and to which Lord George Gordon contributed £50, he always used the Prayer Book. He was a very attractive preacher, and Sheridan said that his sermons came "red-hot from the heart." Because of his itinerating as a preacher six Bishops refused to ordain him deacon, and he never obtained priest's orders. A somewhat similar case was that of Daniel Rowlands (1713-90), who was curate to his brother at Llangeitho, and attracted thousands by his preaching, and had 1500 to 2500 communicants. When the brother died, the parish petitioned to have Daniel as

¹ In *A Meditation on a Pudding*.

rector; but the Bishop of St Davids appointed the son to the living, so that Daniel was curate to his own son. Then, in 1763, Bishop Squire withdrew his licence; a new building was put up for Daniel Rowlands to preach in, and from all parts of Wales people came to hear him during the remaining years of his life. The Bishop saw his mistake when it was too late to remedy it. Yet another case of a similar kind was that of Joseph Benson (1740-1821). He became devoted to Wesley in 1766, and was made classical master at Kingswood school, where many of Wesley's itinerant preachers were educated; and here he often preached in cottage-meetings. He entered St Edmund Hall, Oxford, in 1769, but in 1770 was invited by Lady Huntingdon to become Head of her new College at Trevecca. As he was not a Calvinist, he could not satisfy the Countess, and he returned to Oxford. All this time he remained a member of the Church of England, in which he desired to be ordained and exercise his gifts as a preacher. He obtained a title to Rowley; but the Bishop of Worcester refused to ordain him, because of his connexion with the Methodists. He then became a Methodist preacher of immense energy and power, always to the front where good work was to be done. He was a keen controversialist, and often defended Methodism from adverse criticism. It was piteous that men such as these should, through prejudice against 'enthusiasm,' be lost to the service of the Church of England.

In the last decade of the reign of George II. the following events should be noted.

Lord Bolingbroke, who had been living in retirement and bitter controversy at Battersea for some years, died 12th December 1751. He was a characteristic product of the age; devoid of principle, but ever ready to improvise principles to suit the exigencies of the moment. "In his

heart, he rejected all the dogmatic beliefs which the Church prescribed. In his life, he treated with contempt the moral precepts she enjoined. Yet he was, to the last, one of her most loyal and devoted adherents."¹ That a sceptical profligate should be the leader of High Church Tories was remarkable enough. He was as ready to take up the cause of the Pretender as to drop it, according as circumstances seemed to require. He tried to unite Whigs and Tories on the plausible plea that, the Hanoverians being accepted by both, there was now no difference of principle between them; and Chesterfield told him that he had succeeded in uniting them—against himself. In a similar spirit, but with much less show of reason, he seems to have thought that, by a plentiful watering down of creeds, Churchmen and freethinkers might be induced to join hands. He helped Pope to write the *Essay on Man* (1732); and perhaps those four Epistles fairly represent such religious convictions as he possessed.

In July 1750, Joseph Butler, Bishop of Bristol, was translated to the much wealthier and more important See of Durham, in succession to E. Chandler. His brief tenure of the see was marked by great liberality to charities and hospitality to all. The one permanent memorial of it is the famous Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Durham in 1751. The passage in it about the importance of externals in religion, combined with the fact that he had placed a plain cross in the episcopal chapel at Bristol, led to the ridiculous report that he died a Romanist. His early death at the age of sixty, 16th June 1752, was one of the greatest losses that the Church of England sustained in that age. His writings probably had not much influence at the time. It is tempting, but misleading, to suggest that they were one of the chief causes of the collapse of

¹ R. Harrop, *Bolingbroke*, p. 331.

Deism which followed soon after his death. But they remain as a permanent enlightenment to all those who can appreciate the philosophical treatment of religion, and as part of the education of every well-instructed English clergyman—indeed of every well-read Englishman.

Butler was nursed in his last illness by Martin Benson (1689-1752), who since 1734 had been Bishop of Gloucester. He was the intimate friend of Secker and Berkeley, and was one of the most excellent Bishops of the century. In Porteus's *Life of Secker* there is a beautiful description of his character, and Pope has divided a laudatory couplet between him and Berkeley.

Manners with candour are to Denson given,
To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

Berkeley called him "the delight of mankind." Gloucester was a poor bishopric, but he refused to be promoted, and spent much money on the cathedral and the palace. He twice gave five guineas to Whitefield to help him in his work, and offered to give him a cure. He was one of those who saw the urgent need of supplying America with Bishops, and left money for this purpose. His anxiety and care for Butler on his deathbed hastened his own death, and he survived his friend by less than three months. He died 30th August 1752. He was one of those who had appreciated the value of Queen Caroline's life to the Church of England. He wrote to Berkeley: "The Queen's death is a severe blow. Those who would not be persuaded, while she lived, how sincere a friend she was to our Church and constitution, have since her death been fully persuaded of it."

A few months later his far more famous friend passed away. George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, died at Oxford, while his wife was reading to him the 15th chapter of

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I Corinthians, 14th January 1753. As a metaphysician, and as an opponent of materialism, his position is of the highest; and in his *Alciphron* he adds to his own metaphysical argument the main arguments against the Deists. Like Butler, he has been charged with using, in defence of Revealed Religion, arguments which lead to scepticism; but it would be more true to say that his theory smooths the way for those who hold that Mind is the only reality.

The next year, 1754, Henry Pelham and Henry Fielding died, and the first part of Hume's *History of England* was published. Hume's detestation of the intolerance of the Puritans, and his admiration for the culture, which he commonly found on the side of the royalists, gave much offence to the Whigs.

By the deaths of Archbishop Herring, 13th March 1757, and of Archbishop Hutton, 19th March 1758, the Primacy changed hands rapidly, and passed to Butler's fellow-student and friend, Thomas Secker (1693-1768), who had been Butler's predecessor at Bristol (1734-7), and in 1737 had been translated to Oxford. His attitude towards Methodism is of special interest. He had the usual episcopal dislike of 'enthusiasm'; but he agreed with what Butler says in his sermons on the Love of God, "that there is such a thing as having so great a horror of one extreme, as to run insensibly into the other; and that a doctrine's having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purposes of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it."¹ Secker recognized the genuine piety of the Methodists, and the difference between the Dissenters, who had separated from the Church, and the Methodists who had not. Like Butler, he was strongly in favour of supplying the American Church with Bishops. Like the rest of the

¹ Sermon xiii.

Bishops, he refused to oppose the Jews' Naturalization Bill, which the Pelhams introduced in 1753, and which passed both Houses, in spite of fierce denunciation in the Commons. One M.P. said that to give Jews a home in England would invalidate prophecy, and thereby destroy some of the evidences of Christianity. If the Jews were naturalized, they might get into Parliament and make atrocious laws. Jewish usurers would get hold of English estates, and would destroy the English Church. The Act would bring upon England the curses pronounced upon the Jews. To all this Secker turned a deaf ear. But when he saw what furious excitement the Act (which could benefit only a few wealthy Jews) provoked throughout the country,¹ and when the ministry in consequence decided to repeal it in 1754, Secker supported the repeal. In doing so, he spoke with such approval of the principle of the Act, that he was thought by its bitter opponents to be arguing in favour of maintaining it. As Lord Lyttelton said: "He who hates another man for not being a Christian is himself not a Christian." This frenzied outcry against the Naturalization of the Jews must be remembered in connexion with the omission to repeal the penal laws against Romanists, Quakers, and other Dissenters. It shows how impossible it was for any Government, however liberal-minded, to get any measure of toleration accepted by the people. The nation insisted upon maintaining the persecuting laws, although it was often willing to wink at their being relaxed in practice. Ministers had to uphold legislation, which they could sometimes mitigate, rarely amend, and never abolish.

¹ The fable about Jews crucifying children was produced once more. Bishops were mobbed for having voted for the Act: never since the time of Christ had there been a set of prelates who would have countenanced so anti-Christian a measure. William Romaine, the popular Low Church preacher at St George's, Hanover Square, took a leading part in the discreditable agitation.

One other death, which fell within the decade 1750-1760, calls for brief mention. While Secker was Bishop of Oxford he was sent in 1742 to mediate between the King and the Prince of Wales, with special reference to the annual allowance to be made to the latter.¹ The resignation of Walpole facilitated the negotiations, and somewhat more decent relations were established between the Prince and his father for a short time. Early in 1751 the Prince was out of health, and he died suddenly, 20th March, in the arms of a dancing-master, who had been playing the violin to him. It is difficult to determine who behaved worst to the other, George II. or his eldest son; but probably the son was the more exasperating of the two. The fact that his mother and his sister Amelia were ceaseless in their condemnation of him points in that direction. Lord Hervey (no doubt a prejudiced witness) speaks in the strongest terms of the Prince's folly and baseness.² The well-known epitaph,

Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead, etc. etc.,

gives the national estimate of this contemptible Prince. His life illustrates the moral condition of the Hanoverian

¹ Thomson's *Edward and Eleanor*, produced in 1739, was suppressed because of the complimentary references to the Prince. Shortly before this, being expelled from St James's, he settled at Norfolk House, in the parish of St James's, Westminster, of which Secker was rector. The first time that the Prince went to church, the curate began the service with "I will arise and go to my Father," and the rector preached on the Fifth Commandment.—(Gausson, *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom*, p. 83.)

² "There was nobody too low or too bad for him to court, nobody too great or too good for him to betray. . . . No sincerity in his professions, no stability in his attachments, no sense in his conversation, no dignity in his behaviour, and no judgment in his conduct." He never had "the least hesitation, from principle or fear of detection, in telling any lie that served his present purpose" (*Memories*, ii. pp. 196, 197, 298). His mother said that he was "the greatest ass, the greatest liar, and the greatest beast in the whole world."

court, but his death had no marked effect upon either morality or religion. Still, the removal of the cause of a gross scandal in the royal family was so far a moral gain to the nation. It is characteristic of the age that Bishop Newton, at that time lecturer at St George's, Hanover Square, not only preached a fulsome funeral sermon in praise of the Prince, but has preserved in his autobiography the passage in which he poured forth his unseemly praises. "It is the most fatal blow that this nation has felt for many, many years; and the more we consider it, the more reason we find to lament it." After expatiating on the loss to the Prince's family, he goes on: "It is impossible to think without horror of the infinite loss to the public. Religion hath lost a defender, liberty hath lost a guardian, trade hath lost a protector, the arts have lost a patron, all mankind have lost a friend: for never was there in a person of such eminence more humanity to the lowest, more courtesy to the highest, more beneficence to all within his sphere, or more benevolence to all without it." The Princess of Wales forthwith made Dr Newton one of her chaplains, and "ever afterwards was particularly gracious to him."

George II. outlived his eldest son by nine years: he passed away 25th October 1760. Beilby Porteus, then a clerical Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and afterwards (1787) Bishop of London, had won the Seatonian prize in 1759 by a poem on Death. On the King's death he produced some fulsome verses which have been severely castigated in Thackeray's *Four Georges*. The following quotation will suffice:—

Blend all his grandsire's virtues with his own
And form their mingled radiance for the throne—
No farther blessing could on earth be given—
The next degree of happiness was—heaven.

That also illustrates the moral condition of the age. With all its prosaic tendencies, it could be astoundingly unreal. Perhaps the Seatonian prizeman would have pleaded that no one would suppose that his verses were to be believed. But a modern writer of competent knowledge can write thus of George II. "He was totally incapable of any sort of dissimulation, or even simulation; honourable also, except when spite or avarice¹ intervened [a large exception], loyal to his allies, and an exact observer of his pledged word. His rationalistic queen never awakened in him any interest in theological controversy, or any form of speculative thought, and he remained to the day of his death an implicit believer in orthodox protestantism, ghosts, witches, and vampires" (J. M. Rigg, in *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxi. p. 171).

A few days after the King's death Mrs Elizabeth Montagu wrote thus to Lord Lyttelton respecting him: "It would be perfect sacrilege and robbing the mighty dead of his due rites, if one began one's letter with any subject but the loss of our sovereign; on which I condole with your Lordship, in whom the virtue of Patriotism, and the antiquated one of Loyalty, still remain. I know you had that veneration for our late King which the justice and prudence of his government so well deserved. With him our laws and liberties were safe; he possessed in a great degree the confidence of his people and the respect of foreign governments; and a certain steadiness of character made him of great consequence in these unsettled times.² During his long reign we never were subject to the insolence and rapaciousness of favourites, a grievance of all others most intolerable, and more grievous to the spirits

¹ "Avarice," says Lord Chesterfield, "the meanest of all passions, was his ruling one; and I never knew him deviate into any generous action."

² Wesley wrote in his *Journal*: "When will England have a better prince?"

than even to the fortunes of free-born men. If we consider only the evils we have avoided during his late Majesty's reign, we shall find abundant matter of gratitude towards him and respect for his memory. His character would not afford subject for Epic poetry, but will look well in the sober page of history." (*Elizabeth Montagu, the Queen of the Blue-Stockings, her Correspondence*, edited by E. J. Climençon, ii. p. 210).

CHAPTER V

FROM THE DEATH OF GEORGE II. IN 1760 TO THE
CONSECRATION OF TWO BISHOPS FOR AMERICA
IN 1787

BY the accession of George III. England once more had an English King. In one of his first utterances to his subjects he said: "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton." He came to the throne amidst general enthusiasm. It was quite evident that his dynasty was established, and that a Jacobite restoration was no longer to be feared. George III. was both English and an Anglican; and it was now the Pretender who was an alien both in family and in creed. The simple tastes and religious habits of the young King, free alike from affectation and fanaticism, increased the popular liking for him, especially in contrast to the scandalous lives of his father, grandfather, and greatgrandfather. And yet this early popularity was little less than tragic. The country was giving a hearty welcome to a sovereign, who was destined—one may almost say, who had already determined,—to do it a great mischief. From this point of view his personal virtues were a source of evil: they seemed to sanctify his errors, and they either blinded his subjects to the magnitude of his errors or made them too indulgent towards them. No doubt the example of a moral royal family was a real blessing to the nation; but its effect was a good deal diminished by the misconduct

of the King's sons, whom he educated unwisely.¹ And the moral reformation of the country, which took place during his reign, was produced less by the example of the King than by the action of the Methodists, in whom the King took a friendly interest, but whose work he did not do much to further. Other causes of the reformation in morals were the reaction from the growing scepticism, and (towards the end of the century) from the wild doctrines and practices of the revolutionaries in France. Alarm at both of these stirred the clergy and the thoughtfulness in England to take energetic measures for the revival of moral and religious earnestness. It was these facts, rather than the respectable lives of the King and those about him, that produced such beneficial results. The amiable features of his private life blinded his own generation to his monstrous faults, just as the vile details of the life of his grandfather blinded the subjects of George II. to *his* real merits. And to a large extent the too favourable judgment on the one, and the too severe judgment on the other continue to our own day. His bluff honesty, and dogged courage, and (perhaps we may add) his rooted distrust and abhorrence of new ideas, caused George III. to be popular then, and they win him no little admiration even now: but it was a strange combination of events which put one of the most stupid

¹ "Around a young King, himself of the most exemplary life and undoubted piety, lived a court society as dissolute as our country ever knew. George II.'s bad morals bore their fruit in George III.'s early years" (Thackeray, *Four Georges*). For specimens of contemporary praise of the young King see Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd series, iv. pp. 425 ff. Gray writes to W. Mason, 10th December 1760, that after a laudatory sermon from one of his chaplains the King sent word: "I desire those gentlemen may be told that I come here to praise God, and not to hear my own praises"; also that, when the Duke of Newcastle asked him what sum was to be spent on the next election, he said: "Nothing, my lord; I desire to be tried by my country." Four years later, 10th July 1764, Gray wrote to T. Wharton: "Are you not struck with the great similarity there is between the first years of Charles I. and the present times? Who would have thought it possible five years ago?"

of sovereigns over a great nation, to rule for a long period, that was marked by positions of unusual difficulty and importance.¹ During the latter part of his reign, when he became insane and blind, pity for his afflictions added not a little to his popularity; but it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that he had been intellectually blind and insane from the first. No modern king has inflicted upon the country more serious and lasting mischief than that which was brought about by the ignorance, prejudice, and self-will of George III. Unassuming as he was in his manners towards the people with whom he conversed, he had the most extravagant ideas about the royal prerogative, and also about the unswerving superiority of his own judgment. On these two points he was Charles I. and James I. combined: and yet he was neither detested nor despised, but—almost because of his wrongheadedness—beloved and esteemed. The measures which he persistently opposed were nearly always those which would have benefited the nation, while those which he supported with such unconstitutional vehemence were nearly always grievous mistakes. Let us confine ourselves to those questions which specially concern morality and religion. George III. supported the slave-trade; and, if he could have had his way, he would have deprived Englishmen of the chief safeguards of their liberties. He opposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, declaring that

¹ Lord Holland says of him: "He was a man of principle, honest and anxious in forming his rule of action, sagacious in the application and steady in the observance of it; but then his views were narrow and mischievous, his judgments warped and his feelings illiberal. His distrust of mankind made him deem insincerity necessary and justifiable. . . . He was, too, a stranger to every generous affection which renders a Prince either amiable or benevolent. There was nothing great, nothing kind, nothing open, nothing graceful, in his character or manners" (*Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*). See Massey, *Reign of King George III.*, chap. ii.; W. H. Craig, *Life of Lord Chesterfield*, p. 88.

they were the palladium of the constitution. With passionate violence he resisted the emancipation of Roman Catholics; and he would not allow any Romanist to hold high office in the army, although he knew that thousands of Romanists fought as bravely as anyone else for him in the ranks.

The main fount of all evil was the young King's resolve to recover all that he could of royal prerogative and royal power. Why should he not be as absolute as the monarchs who ruled in the small principalities of Germany and in the great kingdoms of France, Spain, Austria, and Russia? Why should the sovereign of a great country like Britain be in a worse position than any of these? The constitution, rightly interpreted, showed that the royal power was not so circumscribed as was commonly supposed. Blackstone's *Commentaries*, delivered as lectures at Oxford in 1758, had been borrowed in MS. by Lord Bute for the instruction of the future King. In them he found it stated: "The King of England is not only the chief, but properly the sole magistrate of the nation, all others acting by commission from and in due subordination to him." "He may reject what bills, may make what treaties, . . . may pardon what offences he pleases, unless when the Constitution hath expressly, or by evident consequence, laid down some exception or boundary." Blackstone also taught him that the King has the sole power of regulating fleets and armies, of manning forts, of making peace and war, of conferring offices and privileges. Yet much must be allowed for that morbid condition of brain, which showed itself only fitfully for many years, but which ended in prolonged mania. Even without the promptings of his mother and Bute and Blackstone, such a character would have given trouble. He had a very

high opinion of his own judgment; and, within the limits of his narrow prejudices, he was really conscientious. To him, therefore, all who differed from him were either fools for opposing the royal wisdom, or knaves for impeding the King's sense of duty; and this made him not only obstinate, but at times very implacable. In his determination to wrest power from the Whigs, *i.e.* from a few Whig families, we can heartily admire him. His error lay in determining to transfer the power, not to the nation in Parliament, but to himself, who was to rule in accordance with the ideas of Tudors and Stuarts. Both George III. and the great statesman who was thirty years his senior, and who was then in a very strong position in England and in Europe, desired to put an end to party government, whether by Whigs or Tories; but the one wished the power of the dominant party to be always in the Crown, while the other wished it to be with the ministers who represented the national will. And it was the young King who won.¹

Among the many advantages which George III. had in succeeding to the Crown, was the fact that his kingdom was singularly free from internal discord. It has been pointed out already that there was no longer any fear respecting the Pretender. Here and there Jacobite sentiment survived; but nowhere in England was there any Jacobite policy. And at no period since the Reformation was the kingdom more free from religious strife. The Church, free from Jacobite sympathies, was wholly on the side of the King, to whose person and life it could now show deep respect, without seeming to compromise its own character as the upholder of morality.

¹ Pitt threw away his enormous advantages by the unpopular steps of accepting a title and £3000 a year. "Oh that foolishness of great men, that sold his inestimable diamond for a paltry peerage and pension!" (Gray to Thomas Wharton, January 1761; comp. Gray to Wharton, 26th August 1766).

Even from Oxford "Jacobitism disappeared like a dream." The Dissenters had from the first supported the House of Hanover, and had no wish to withdraw from it now. The almost annual Acts of Indemnity freed them from oppression, and they worked peaceably side by side with the Church. And now, thanks to Methodism, they began to increase in numbers.¹ Even the Roman Catholics ceased to be regarded as a perennial danger. They had lost all hope of a restoration of their religion in England. Some of them, to avoid the penal laws, had conformed, and the rest were quietly loyal. They were exposed to fitful "No Popery" outbursts, but they caused no religious discord in public life.

Before the Coronation several appointments to bishoprics were made. Thomas Hayter, who had been the King's tutor, was promoted from Norwich to London, and Philip Yonge from Bristol to Norwich. Robert Hay Drummond was sent from St Asaph to Salisbury, and almost immediately afterwards to York.² As chaplain to George II. he had preached the thanksgiving sermon after the Battle of Dettingen at Hanau, 7th July 1743; and he preached at the Coronation of George III. and Queen Charlotte, 22nd September 1761. The sermon was praised as being "free from fulsome panegyrick," such as was so common at that time: it contains a simple statement of the mutual

¹ Trustworthy statistics are wanting; but there is reason to believe that for a good many years Dissent had been falling in numerical strength. See Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, i. pp. 221, 227-230. John Watkins, *History of Bideford*, 1792, says that the Dissenters, who in 1762 had been one-quarter of the population, did not then amount to one-eighth. The Methodists there were very few.

² Other appointments soon followed (Gray, *Letter to Rev. Jas. Brown*, 1761). In another letter to him, 24th September 1761, Gray gives an amusing account of the Coronation, at which "the King was often obliged to call out, and set matters right." At the banquet the King and Queen "eat like farmers." Bishop Newton's impressions of the Coronation are somewhat different (*Life*, p. 114). So also are Mrs Montagu's (*Correspondence*, ii. p. 259).

duties between Sovereign and subjects. He was a strong opponent of Calvinism and freely expressed his dislike of what looked like Calvinism in the Articles and Homilies. He also disapproved of 'Enthusiasm' in religion, and therefore of Methodism.

But, in spite of the frowns of Bishops and others in high places, the influence of the Methodist movement continued to spread both inside and outside the Church of England; and henceforth it will be convenient to make a distinction in phraseology. Although no hard and fast line can be drawn between the two movements, yet, on the whole, it will be well to use the term 'Methodist' for the activities which were independent and outside of the work of the Church of England, and the term 'Evangelical' for the movement which was inside the Church, and was carried on by those who were Church people, and who would have repudiated with indignation the suggestion that they had left, or might as well leave, the communion of the English Church. The relation between Methodism and the Evangelical movement in the Church of England is not easy to state with exactitude. But the simple explanation that the latter was produced by the former is certainly not satisfactory. It is only to a limited extent true, and it is by no means the whole of the truth. No doubt the Evangelical movement was quickened by the influence of Wesley and Whitefield, especially at the time when it was clear that they were working within the limits of the English Church; but, if they had never existed, the Evangelical movement would have taken place. One gets nearer to the truth when one regards the two movements as sisters, rather than as parent and child, both owing their origin to the Pietistic development among Low Churchmen, which found its highest expression in the writings of William Law. It would be a pardon-

able exaggeration to say that the spirit which generated both movements is that which inspired Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. This famous book, which still influences many souls, was published in 1728, and in 1732 Wesley visited Law at Putney. About 1738 Wesley threw aside a great deal of Law's teaching; but he continued to value the *Serious Call*, which he used as a text-book in his school at Kingswood. He called it "a treatise which will hardly be excelled in the English tongue either for beauty of expression or for justice and depth of thought."¹ He owned that it and Law's *Christian Perfection* sowed the seeds of Methodism. Dr Coke, whom Wesley 'set apart' as an episcopal superintendent of the Methodists in America, said that "the great Mr Law" was "the great forerunner of the Revival which followed, and did more to promote it than any individual whatsoever; yea, more perhaps than the rest of the nation collectively." Whitefield confessed that by means of the *Serious Call* "God worked powerfully upon his soul." He, like Wesley, moved away from Law's teaching, but he continued to venerate the teacher. It is probable that most of the Evangelical leaders were inspired by the *Serious Call*: certainly this is true of Henry Venn and Thomas Scott. His son says that Venn "read it repeatedly with peculiar interest and advantage, and immediately began, with great sincerity, to frame his life according to the Christian model there delineated." James Hervey is perhaps another instance. He was curate of Bideford about 1740-43, and here he probably began his *Meditations among the Tombs*, published in 1746. Visiting Bideford in 1744 Whitefield

¹ John Byrom (25th April 1761) says that Thomas Patten told him that, "Lord Lyttelton, having lately taken up the *Serious Call* about bedtime at a friend's house, was fascinated to read it quite through before he could go to rest." Dr Johnson was greatly impressed by it, and Gibben recognized its spiritual power.

says: "Dear Hervey laid the blessed foundation, whilst a curate here." It is one more proof of the debased taste of the age that, even by educated people, Hervey's inflated and florid wordiness was preferred to the logical and spiritual strength of Law's *Serious Call*, which it for a time largely superseded. It suited, Whitefield says, "the taste of the polite world."¹ Whitefield introduced Hervey's works into America, and spoke enthusiastically of their author as a "most heavenly-minded creature." Doddridge, the author of the *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, a work translated into numerous languages, wrote a Preface to one of Hervey's works, which is further evidence of their popularity.

The word 'revival,' which from the first was used, and can hardly be avoided, in connexion with both 'Methodist' and 'Evangelical,' requires a word of explanation, in order to avoid misunderstanding. The term seems to imply that, until these movements began to stir the hearts and consciences of the people of that generation, religious life, both inside and outside the Church, scarcely existed. This is quite untrue. It had died down in many places in which it ought to have flourished; and there were not many places in which it was conspicuous. But it was burning brightly in some; and the great response which was made to the efforts of the Methodist and Evangelical teachers is proof of the amount of spiritual life which there was in many sections of society, needing nothing more than a sympathetic voice to call it into activity.²

¹ R. Philip defends Hervey's style, and regrets that he is not read now (*Life and Times of Whitefield*, pp. 347-9). Try him.

² One can to some extent measure the improvement in the upper classes during the latter part of the century by examining the condition of the most fashionable watering-place in England at two different periods. Compare the Bath of *Humphrey Clinker* with the Bath of *Northanger Abbey*. Allow for the possibility

Yet another factor must be taken into account in considering the genesis of Evangelicalism. The Puritanism of the seventeenth century had passed into obscurity at the Restoration, but its spirit still survived among certain sections of the Church of England. We can trace some of its elements clearly enough in the rising Evangelical school. The special emphasis upon certain doctrines, such as that of conversion and of the need of grace, the frequent use of Scriptural language, the condemnation of particular forms of amusement, as the theatre, dancing, and games of chance; and the general advocacy of a narrow strictness of life;—all these features of the old Puritanism found new life in the Evangelicals. But there were some marked points of difference. The Evangelical gloried in being a member of the Church of England, and scouted the idea of deserting it, while the Puritan would have seen the English Church go to pieces with ready complacency. What was a palace and a fortress to the one was a prison to the other. The one delighted in the liturgy as much as the other disliked it. And the Evangelical was commonly free from the chilling gloominess which so often characterized the Puritan. In one respect the Puritans had the advantage. Not a few of them were learned and scholarly men, who produced theological works, which, though too often controversial, were solid contributions to the subject. There was not much of this among the Evangelicals, who devoted themselves rather to preaching, and missions, and works of charity of all kinds. In another respect the advantage was rather the other way. The Puritan was a strong political partizan, often in persistent opposition to the Government. The

that Smollett exaggerates the worst features, and that Jane Austen ignores them; still, the difference between 1771, when his novel was published, and 1798, when hers was finished, is enormous; the difference between fashionable vice and brutality, and fashionable decorum.

Evangelicals cared very little about politics, and were nearly always loyal.

It is remarkable that the Evangelicals were able to gain such great influence among the educated classes with so little intellectual power, and so little sympathy with intellectual questions. It was doubtless the reality and earnestness of their religious convictions which enabled them to do this; but the fact that their convictions were often based upon feeling rather than upon thought was always a weakness to them. They could produce attractive and moving preachers; but they seldom had men who were willing to face, much less able to answer, intellectual difficulties. They took the Authorised Version as it is, and were content to explain it on the old theory of verbal inspiration, and to treat anything like Biblical criticism as gratuitous irreverence. The developments in physical science, which had been promoted by Sir Isaac Newton and others, did not interest them. The working throughout the universe of ascertainable laws was to them much less probable, because apparently less edifying, than the supposition that Providence was constantly changing the course of events in the supposed interests of religion. While rejecting with incredulity the narratives of miracles wrought by mediæval saints, they encouraged a theory of Divine action which was almost as difficult to reconcile with reason and with facts. They had adopted as axiomatic the beliefs which they regarded as orthodox; and not only doubt, but discussion which might end in doubt, was discouraged as sinful. This is one of the grave defects of the Evangelical movement. At a time of crisis in religious opinion, when enlightened guidance was needed in the work of readjusting beliefs in the face of new and startling facts, Evangelicalism rendered no help. It either ignored the new facts, or it distorted both

them and Scripture, in order to bring out apparent harmony. In this way it not only discouraged the search for truth; it weakened men's love of truth, and their power of appreciating it.

Hence the Evangelicals did not produce much that can rank as literature. The Methodists had produced hymns; but not all Evangelicals approved of hymns. Calvin had enjoined strict following of the words of Scripture; and, where his influence prevailed, metrical paraphrases of the Psalms were the nearest approach to hymns that were tolerated. In a sermon before the University, Romaine intimated that a preference of hymns to Tate and Brady was a preference of human compositions to those of the Holy Spirit. The Evangelicals may claim much of Cowper's poetry; and in prose there is Milner's *Ecclesiastical History*, the patristic quotations in which were such a delight to J. H. Newman in his early days. We may add Scott's *Biblical Commentaries*, Newton's *Cardiphonia*; Romaine's *Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*; Rowland Hill's *Village Dialogues*; Venn's *Complete Duty of Man*, intended as a corrective to the *Whole Duty of Man*; Wilberforce's *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious Systems of Professed Christians*, and perhaps a few more of which the titles are not quite forgotten, however little may be known of their contents.

It was said above that the Evangelicals did not care much about politics: but they sometimes exerted considerable influence, which was not always healthful, on political affairs. Their influence was very mischievous on the question of the treatment of Roman Catholics. Notice has several times been taken of the abominable penal laws against Romanists, one of the worst of which was passed with the sanction of William III. The Evangelicals were in no way responsible for the making of such laws;

but they were largely responsible for the delay in repealing such legislation.¹ But for them, the repeal might have come fifty or sixty years earlier than 1829. Thomas Scott declared that to remove Roman Catholic disabilities would be a great sin; and from the "No Popery" riots in 1780 onwards, many of the Evangelicals contended fiercely against allowing any political power to Papists. In the end, the nation's sense of justice triumphed. But the evil done by Evangelical opposition was twofold: it needlessly prolonged and aggravated a period of bitter sectarian conflict, and it caused the long delayed concession of what was just to lose all its graciousness. The recipients of emancipation were not conciliated by being made to struggle so long for their rights.

It is much pleasanter to dwell on the excellent political influence which the Evangelicals exercised in the promotion of legislation for the abolition of the Slave Trade and of Slavery. Here they contributed greatly to the awakening of the national conscience. How much need there was of an awakening is shown by the strange career of John Newton, conducting devotional services on board his slave-ship, and by the fact that even the S.P.G. owned slaves.² It was a new doctrine, spoken with authority, that Christian sympathy ought to know no limits of country or colour; and the driving home of this doctrine was largely the work of the Evangelicals.

The Evangelicals did a great deal for education, especially religious education. "It is a remarkable fact, that during

¹ There were some, Hannah More says, who declared that it was a sin to interfere with God's judgments on the French priests, who had been driven out of France by the Revolution. God had willed that they should perish, and they ought not to be saved from starvation.

² Whitefield agreed with the Moravians that in Georgia slaves "might be employed in a Christian spirit"; and slavery was introduced, having been expressly forbidden at first as "a horrid crime."

the whole of the eighteenth century, the task of educating the English poor, as far as it was undertaken at all, was left to the different religious denominations, and to the benevolence of individuals and voluntary associations, without the smallest assistance from Government" (Lecky, *Eighteenth Century*, vi. p. 276). There were endowed schools of an earlier age, and parochial schools founded by private benevolence under Anne. But, till near the end of the century, hardly anything was done for education, excepting new charity schools and Sunday schools, and these were largely promoted by the Evangelicals. The Government, by its law that no school should be opened without a license from the Bishop, had impeded education; but this law seems to have become obsolete. This neglect of education by the English Government was all the more strange, because other countries were acting very differently. Education became compulsory in Prussia in 1717, and under Frederick William I. about 1700 schools for the poor were founded. Frederick the Great and Maria Teresa acted similarly: and Pestalozzi's system gave a great impetus to education, not only in Switzerland, but throughout Europe.

The Government was equally indifferent to social reform generally. It did not, till individuals took up the matter, bestir itself to free the English statute-book from its monstrous cruelties, inconsistencies, and absurdities. Blackstone counts 160 capital offences.¹ Horace Walpole writes (23rd March 1752): "It is shocking to think what a shambles this country is grown! Seventeen were executed this morning." Tyburn was a brutalizing show. Prisons were dreadful scenes of cruelty

¹ See also Sir Samuel Romilly in his *Observations on Martin Madan* (1786). Women were burnt for petit treason till 1790. Cases are on record in 1772, '83, '88 and '90.

and extortion, under such monsters as Huggins, Bambridge, and Acton :¹ and people were kept there for years for petty debts. Much of the philanthropy which abolished or mitigated these and other evils was found among the Evangelicals. But by no means all of it. Like Voltaire and Rousseau in France, Shaftesbury and Fielding had made benevolence, not only the chief virtue, but nearly the whole of it; and this influence had borne fruit side by side with the religious influence. So much so, indeed, that Hannah More asks "whether it is not the fashion rather to consider benevolence as a substitute for Christianity, than an evidence of it. It seems to be one of the reigning errors among the better sort to reduce all religion into benevolence and all benevolence into almsgiving." But the Evangelicals ought not to be accused of reducing all benevolence into almsgiving. They did give their money generously; but, especially in the last decade of the century, they also gave time, thought, and untiring labour, to the work of making the lives of others more pure and bright.

As already indicated, the Evangelicals opposed rather than furthered the cause of religious liberty, especially as regards justice to Roman Catholics. Nevertheless, in England, as elsewhere in Europe, toleration increased, although to us the progress seems slow. At the time, England was still regarded as the home of freedom. Mosheim, writing before 1755, says: "The unbounded liberty which Englishmen enjoy of publishing their opinions without restraint, and of worshipping God in the manner that each one thinks right, naturally causes various sects to arise on every side"; and he says that it is

¹ Calamy, *Own Life*, ii. p. 519; Thomson, *Seasons*, *Winter*, l. 359; Fielding, *Amelia*, Bk. i. ch. iv.; W. C. Sydney, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. pp. 307 ff.; John Thomas Smith, *A Book for a Rainy Day*, 1802.

hardly possible to give an accurate account of these sects and controversies without having lived in this "happy nation."¹ This may be too flattering, or indicate the imperfect knowledge of a foreigner. But Philip Doddridge, writing in or soon after 1753, speaks of freedom from religious persecution as one of the brightest features in a dark age. Under George III. prosecutions for heresy were very rare. There is the case of Peter Annet, who in 1762 was sentenced to stand twice in the pillory and be imprisoned for a year with hard labour, for a scurrilous attack on Christianity, but it is exceptional. And, outside the Isle of Man, Church discipline was not very often enforced. Ecclesiastical courts, however, still possessed considerable powers of persecution. Excommunication could be inflicted for various offences, some of them trivial, such as non-payment of fees; and excommunicate persons might be imprisoned for years. The penalty of doing penance in a white sheet was not quite extinct in the last years of the century. The poet Wordsworth (1770-1850) remembered going to Church on a week-day about 1777, to see a woman doing penance in a white sheet. There were two cases at Hurstmonceaux about 1799-1803; and at Littleham, near Exmouth, Sarah Chamberlain did penance in this way in 1805. Excommunication for non-payment of fees was not abolished until 1813. The growth of religious freedom, or at least toleration of dissent from the Established Church, may be explained in two ways. Those who have a bad opinion of the eighteenth century may attribute it to the general indifference to all forms of religion. Those who think better of that time will claim this as evidence of its strong common sense and perhaps its sense of justice.

But Dissenters were not yet free from persecution.

¹ *Eccles. Hist.*, iii. p. 483.

Between 1748 and 1767 the Corporation of the City of London was guilty of a dastardly method of persecution, by means of which it raised £15,000 for the building of a new Mansion House. A man who, when nominated Sheriff by the Lord Mayor, refused to stand, was fined £400; and a man who, when elected Sheriff, refused to serve, was fined £600. To be a Sheriff, a person had to receive the Holy Communion according to the Anglican rite; and wealthy Dissenters, who would be sure to object to this, were frequently elected. At last a victim named Evans fought the case; and the House of Lords decided that Nonconformists could not be fined for refusing to serve in offices to which they were ineligible. Lord Mansfield, in giving judgment, condemned the tactics of the Corporation with great severity.

A very important step in the direction of religious liberty was taken when the Quebec Act of 1774, establishing Romanism in Canada, was passed. The Act was very unpopular, and George III. was hooted when he went to Parliament to give the royal assent to it. It now became much more difficult to maintain the monstrous penal laws against Romanists in England. There were at that time about seven peers, twenty-two baronets, and a hundred and fifty English landowners, who were Romanists. They were as law-abiding as the rest of the population. Why should they be subject, at the caprice of prosecutors, to outrageous penalties? Informers could still get £100 for getting a Roman priest convicted of performing his functions in England. It was very rarely attempted, and still more rarely with success, because judges did their utmost to defeat such attempts by insisting upon the most conclusive evidence; but it was possible. John Baptist Malony in 1767 was sentenced to imprisonment for life for administering the

sacrament to a sick person : after a few years he was released and exiled. The law of William III. was the most perilous to Romanists ; but in 1778 Sir George Savile got parts of it repealed for all who would abjure the Pretender, the temporal jurisdiction and deposing power of the Pope, and the doctrines that no faith need be kept with heretics and that heretics may be put to death for their heresy. "The penalties in question," he said, "are disgraceful not only to religion but to humanity. They are calculated to loosen all the bands of society, to poison the sources of domestic felicity, and to annihilate every principle of honour." He knew of cases in which Romanists were living, not only under terror, but even under payments of blackmail to informers who threatened them. The Bill was carried in both Houses without a division—signal evidence of the improvement which had taken place in educated opinion.

Public opinion outside the House was not so favourable. A similar measure was promised for Scotland ; and there the feeling against it at once became intense. Robertson, the historian, and all who were supposed to favour toleration were denounced. Romanists were hardly safe, and they themselves wrote a letter to Lord North, which was published early in 1779, petitioning that the measure might be dropped. Nevertheless, furious 'No Popery' riots broke out in Edinburgh and Glasgow, both press and pulpit helping to fan the flame. The fanaticism spread to England, and quickly showed that intolerance there was by no means extinct ; but there was at first no one to lead the malcontents, for no statesman would show any sympathy. At last a leader was found in a godson of George II. The result was the frightful Lord George Gordon Riots in London, lasting from the 2nd to the 9th of June 1780 ; and there were similar riots on a smaller

scale at Bath, Bristol, and Hull. So furious had the opposition to Savile's Relief Act become. It is remarkable that the leader, who would hardly allow anyone to be anything but a Protestant Christian, should have ended his life as a Jew. But Lord George Gordon, who died in Newgate, 1st November 1793, ought to have been sent to a lunatic asylum rather than to a prison. The shame of these frenzied outbursts against Romanists and those who desired to be less unjust towards them was keenly felt in England. Cowper has expressed this feeling in verse with regard to the destruction of Lord Mansfield's library:—

So then, the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw.

And Gibbon has done the same in prose: "Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June 1780 will ever be marked by a dark fanaticism which I had supposed to be extinct."¹ And on the Continent severe things were said. Maria Teresa wrote to Marie Antoinette (30th June 1780) that she feared to visit England after the recent horrors—outbursts unheard of in civilized states. Madame Du Deffand said that our English liberty seemed to be far less tolerable than their want of it.

But in this matter it was the Continent which now had the advantage. The spirit of toleration had increased there more rapidly than in England, and religion was becoming less and less decisive in politics. The upholders of persecution were nearly everywhere condemned. The Jesuits were driven out of Poland in 1759. France in

¹ See also the *Diary* of Fanny Burney, who gives vivid pictures of the general dismay.

1764, Bohemia and Denmark in 1766, Spain, Genoa, and Venice in 1767, Malta, Naples, and Parma in 1768; and then Clement XIV. suppressed the whole Society in 1773. In several countries clerical powers of persecution were curtailed.

In England, however, neither the Parliament nor the nation had come to a settled and reasoned view with regard to religious freedom. And of course the conservatism of the lawyers was against changes in legislation. English traditions have been always in favour of allowing a law to become a dead letter rather than of repealing it, and the survivals of obsolete legislation have been extraordinary. Elizabeth's laws, making non-attendance at public worship a crime, punishable by a fine of a shilling for each absence, or £20 for a month's absence, were not repealed till 1844 and 1846.¹ And revision of outrageous legislation, when it did take place, was very unsystematic. Here a civil disability was removed, or a penalty for religious practice was abolished. Sometimes the Papists, sometimes a Protestant sect received some consideration.² Illegalities were winked at, or by special legislation indemnified. But there was to be another century of religious controversy before the English Parliament would lay down the broad principle that religious liberty is the right of every British subject, and therefore the policy of the British Government.

But, while one has deep sympathy with Romanists and Dissenters, who endeavoured during this reign to get the iniquitous legislation under which they suffered amended, one has no sympathy at all with those Anglicans who in 1772-1774 tried to get clerical subscription of the Articles

¹ Compare 'wager of battle' surviving till 1819, and 'wager of law' till 1833.

² The Act of 1779, freeing Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters from the necessity of signing any of the Thirty-nine Articles, may be mentioned in this connexion. See May, *Const. Hist.*, ii. p. 330, iii. p. 94.

abolished. As early as May 1766, Archdeacon Blackburne (1705-87), who in 1752 had made an anonymous assault on Butler's Durham Charge, had in *The Confessional!* published an anonymous argument against subscription to the Articles. No Protestant minister ought to be required to give more than a profession of belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God, and a promise to teach His people from the Scriptures. In 1771 agitation in favour of this project was begun. The truth was, that Unitarianism had enormously increased in England. It had spread with special rapidity among the Presbyterians; but not a few of the Anglican clergy were affected. Two of these, Theophilus Lindsay, Vicar of Catterick, and John Disney, Vicar of Swinderby and Rector of Panton, joined with Blackburne in getting up a petition to Parliament. Only about 250 clergymen and some 30 or 40 physicians and lawyers were induced to sign it. The Methodists strongly opposed it, and Lady Huntingdon got up counter-petitions. It was introduced in the Commons by Sir W. Meredith, 6th February 1772, and opposed by Lord North, Charles Fox,¹ and Burke. Burke said with great force: "These gentlemen complain of hardships: let us examine a little what that hardship is. They want to be preferred clergymen of the Church of England as by law established; but their consciences will not suffer them to conform to the doctrines and practices of that Church. That is, they want to be teachers in a Church to which they do not belong; and it is an odd sort of hardship. They want to receive the emoluments for teaching one set of doctrines, whilst they are teaching another. . . . The subscription to Scripture is the most astonishing idea I ever heard, and will amount to just nothing at all." Burke

¹ Fox, as Gibbon says, "had prepared himself for that holy war by passing 24 hours in the pious exercise of hazard," at which he lost £11,000.

pointed out that, if they did not like the English Church, there were a hundred sects for them to choose from, or they might start a new one, and get people to pay them for their teaching, "if anyone thinks their fancies worth paying for." Sir Roger Newdegate was equally severe: "The hon. gentleman tells you that the petitioners are respectable. But how? Not surely for number. Is it from their characters that they derive their weight? I desire no better proof of the absurdity of that supposition than this petition. For what is its object? The repeal of the tests of orthodoxy which they have not only professed, but sworn they believed."¹

The petition was rejected by 217 to 71 votes; and Gibben mocks at the result in a letter to Mr Holroyd, 8th February 1772, congratulating him "on the late victory of our dear mama, the Church of England. She had last Thursday 71 rebellious sons, who pretended to set aside her will on the account of insanity; but 217 worthy champions, etc." Similar attempts in 1773 had no better success. Lindsay resigned his living and became a Unitarian minister. Disney, after years of hesitation, did the same; and there were a few other secessions.² Archdeacon Blackburne retained his preferments. But subscription ought to have been confined to the clergy. To require physicians to sign the Articles was unreasonable, and to make lads, who were entering the Universities, do so was still worse, although Dr Johnson defends it.³ But, for the protection of congrega-

¹ On this petition see Cole's *Life of W. S. Powell* in Mayor's edition of Baker's *History of St John's College, Cambridge*, ii. pp. 104 ff.

² These are alluded to by Cowper in *The Task*, vi. *sub fin.* "The veil is rent, etc." A similar trouble affected Dissent: "Open and confessed Arianism had captured almost completely the dissenting Churches" (Fitchett, *Wesley and his Century*, p. 142).

³ Boswell, 1772. Jeremy Bentham, when he matriculated at Oxford in 1760 had scruples, which were not removed by his tutor. "I signed; but by the view which

tions, it was necessary that the clergy should be restrained from contradicting the doctrine of the Church of England. Not until 1854 was the requirement of subscription at matriculation abolished by Act of Parliament.

It was in 1772 that the ludicrous incident respecting Dr Thomas Nowell's sermon took place. He preached before the House of Commons on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I. Only the Speaker and four other members came to hear him; but next day the usual thanks were voted to him, with the usual request to print his sermon. It was a high-flown attack on the principles of 1688, reviving the doctrine of passive obedience, and so forth. When it appeared in print, the Commons were indignant, and Townshend proposed that the sermon should be burned by the common hangman. Lord North reminded the House that they had already thanked the preacher for it; and Townshend had to content himself with getting the vote of thanks expunged. This of course was an excellent advertisement for the sermon; and Gibbon remarked that the preacher's bookseller was "much obliged to the Right Honourable Tommy Townshend." Johnson said that the Government was bound to give Nowell promotion; but the Government did not take this view of its obligations. A little later it was proposed that the Act for the public observance of the 30th January should be repealed; but this was negatived by 125 votes to 97. It was not until 1859 that the commemoration was abolished by Royal Proclamation, and the service for it was removed from the Prayer Book.

It was during 1772 and 1773 that further attempts

I found myself forced to take of the whole business such an impression was made as will never depart from me but with life." Lord Westbury was fourteen when he matriculated. The Vice-Chancellor said to him: "You are too young to take the oath of obedience to the Statutes, but are quite old enough to subscribe the Articles of Religion."

were made, by Sir Henry Hoghton and Sir George Savile, to get some relief for Dissenters. The proposal easily passed the Commons, where the majority were in favour of getting Dissenters to join with Churchmen in a Protestant league against Romanists. But, in the Lords, the Bishops, supported by a number of temporal peers, threw out the Bill by a considerable majority. It seems to have been during one of these debates that Chatham, who supported the Bill, uttered the often quoted words, that the Church of England is Popish in her Liturgy, Calvinistic in her Articles, and Arminian in her clergy, a saying which Mr Gladstone condemned as "a shallow witticism, little worthy of so illustrious a man." But Chatham in his later days could descend to very poor claptrap. In opposing Bishop Barrington and a College of Divinity he said: "There is another College of much greater antiquity as well as veracity, which I am surprised I have never heard so much as mentioned by any of his Lordship's fraternity, and that is the College of the poor, humble, despised fishermen, who pressed hard upon no man's conscience, yet supported the doctrines of Christianity both by their lives and conversations."

It would be a happy thing for the Church of England, if it could be said that its leaders were in no way responsible for the foolish, iniquitous, and disastrous war with the American colonies, 1776-83. At the close of the struggle, the King in opening Parliament, 5th December 1882, announced that he had offered to declare the American colonies free and independent. "Did I lower my voice," he afterwards asked, "when I came to that part of my speech?" Had he been willing to lower it twelve years earlier, by giving reasonable freedom to a full grown and powerful colony, America might to this day have been part of the British Empire. But, not only

his ministers, but a large portion of his subjects, must share with George III. the responsibility for the folly and injustice of endeavouring to force taxation upon a strong body of colonists who were not represented in the Parliament which imposed the taxes. Among the large number of his subjects who encouraged the King in his blind and unrighteous prejudices were nearly the whole of the clergy. The obsolete doctrine of passive obedience was once more brought out, and English congregations were told that the colonists, in resisting oppression, were guilty of the hideous sin of lifting up their hands against the Lord's anointed. Their rebellion was as bad as witchcraft; and Washington was a modern Jeroboam. It was the clergy who helped Lord North to gain overwhelming support at elections; and his war policy had the hearty support of the bench of Bishops, who composed execrable prayers against the Americans, to be used in public worship. Dr Johnson was on the same side, with his *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775),¹ and John Wesley followed suit with his *Calm Address to our Colonies* (1775), *Calm Address to England* (1777), *Serious Address* (1778). Both Oxford and Cambridge sent up petitions supporting the Government in coercing the colonists. On all sides the King's wrongheadedness received plenty of support, but in none is this more lamentable than in leading Churchmen. People confused themselves by discussing abstract rights. Johnson held that England had an indefeasible right to govern America. Pownall main-

¹ Johnson's hatred of slavery may excuse his prejudices against the Americans, but it does not excuse the offensive way in which he stated the claims of England. Two years later he could not speak calmly on the subject (Boswell, 1777). After four more years, he was still unconvinced, but could argue with good temper (Boswell, 1781). He lived to see peace established and died 13th December 1784. Wesley's tract was so liked by the Government that the Treasury bought it for distribution, and the King, who had previously been interested by Methodism, became friendly towards it.

tained that the colonists had an indefeasible right to be represented in Parliament. The colonists believed that they had an indefeasible right to be independent. Burke pointed out that all this talk about abstract rights was futile. The question was one of expediency and fairness. From that point of view no one but an idiot could hold that a policy of barefaced oppression was wise or just. There were a few leading Churchmen who took the same line. Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St Asaph (1769-89), had had Benjamin Franklin more than once as his guest; and he contended that, if it was unjust to tax the colonists, we ought to repeal the tax for their sakes; if it was unwise to tax them, we ought to repeal it for our own. A trivial matter of threepence on tea, which had caused so much hatred and reproach, ought not to be retained for one unnecessary day. John Hinchelife, Bishop of Peterborough (1769-94), was for conciliation before the war broke out, and for peace afterwards. In 1778 he implored the House of Lords not to carry out a system of reprisals, nor encourage the tomahawk and the scalping-knife: that was not the way to convince the world of the justice of their cause. On the same side were Richard Watson, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff (1782-1816); Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester (1758-99), whose tract, *Cui Bono?* was very much read; Paley and Dr Parr. John Jebb should, perhaps, hardly be counted among Anglican cleries. After the failure of the petition for the abolition of subscription to the Articles he resigned his preferments on account of his Unitarian views (1775), and took to medicine as a profession. The Dissenters—to their honour be it said—were almost entirely on the side of justice and common sense; and this general difference of view between them and Anglicans on the burning question of the day did much to revive the old

bitterness between Church and Dissent.¹ In the middle of the century the relations between the two had been more amicable; but the controversy about the colonies revived former differences, and the animosity did not end with the war.

But the war had a very important effect upon the English Church in the colonies; and this deserves even more attention than its effect on the Church at home. The utter insensibility of the English Government as to its religious responsibilities in reference to British possessions beyond the seas is one of the evil characteristics of the eighteenth century. That a minister, such as Waipole, who cared nothing about religion at home, except so far as religion affected politics, should make no provision for religious life in the colonies, is not surprising. And the supineness of the English Church in the matter is evidence of the paralysis which had been creeping over it, largely owing to the baleful influence of the State. But the evil had begun in the previous century. According to the fatal restrictions of the time, the American colonies were in the diocese of London; and any colonist desiring confirmation or ordination had to cross the Atlantic in order to obtain it.² It is said that, when Compton became Bishop of London in 1675, there were scarcely four clergymen of the Church of England in the whole continent of America. Compton seems to have felt his responsibilities as Bishop

¹ "It was one unhappy effect of the American war, that, as it divided the people of Great Britain into two angry parties, which vented their rage against each other with excessive violence, it completely destroyed that national harmony which had subsisted before this mournful event. The Dissenters, in general, adopted the cause of the Americans. But these sentiments were by no means peculiar to them; they were the sentiments of the great body of the English Whigs."—(Bogue and Bennett, *Hist. of Dissenters*, iv. p. 152.)

² This cost about £100; and it is said that about a fifth of the American candidates for Orders died in the attempt to obtain ordination in England. Small-pox was specially fatal to them.

of the British colonies. About 1685 he sent out Dr James Blair as a missionary to Virginia. In 1689 Blair's success was such that he was made commissary, the highest ecclesiastical official in the province. As such, he not only presided at the trial of all ministers of religion, but had a seat on the council of civil government. He worked hard for the foundation of a college, to which the sovereigns granted a charter in 1692, with the name of William and Mary College. Robert Boyle, founder of the Boyle Lectures, was a large contributor, and Blair became the first president. In 1695 the assembly of Maryland asked the Bishop of London to send them a commissary, and Compton appointed Thomas Bray, who at once set to work to provide libraries for the Maryland clergy. The first library was founded at the capital of Maryland, Annapolis. On his way thither he deposited books at Gravesend, Deal, and Plymouth, for the use of missionaries who might have to wait there for a passage. His work in founding parochial libraries at home as well as in America has been already mentioned (p. 22), and he took a leading part in the foundation of both the S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G. (1699-1701). Before returning to England he tried hard to get a Bishop for Maryland.

It may have been Blair's College in Maryland that inspired George Berkeley with the desire to resign the Deanery of Derry, which was a rich one, in order to found a similar college in Bermuda. With great ardour he got promises of money, even one of £200 from Walpole; and, to Walpole's surprise, he got Parliament to vote £20,000.¹ Berkeley sailed in 1728, but he did not get beyond Rhode Island, where he waited for the £20,000. After years of wearisome correspondence, he returned to England early

¹ For the ridicule with which he was treated see *Pravings among Private Papers*, pp. 179, 180.

in 1732, and was told by Walpole that there was no chance of his ever getting the money. It was perhaps as a sort of compensation for this shameful treatment that Berkeley was appointed Bishop of Cloyne in January 1734.

All the American colonies up to this point, beginning with Virginia and ending with Pennsylvania, had been founded in the seventeenth century. In 1732, the money which had been voted to Berkeley, and never paid, was used for founding a new colony in Georgia under General Oglethorpe, who, like Blair, was a decided opponent of slavery. He sailed in 1733, came back next year, and returned in October 1735 with 300 emigrants, among whom were the two Wesleys and a number of Moravians. The Wesleys were sent by the S.P.G., and took with them one of Dr Bray's libraries for Savannah. The emigrants were not the right kind of colonists, and Wesley looked at the mission in rather a one-sided way. He says that they went out to save their *own* souls and live to the glory of God. About saving the souls of the colonists in Georgia and of the Indians further west, which was what he was engaged to do, he says nothing. On the voyage he learnt German from the Moravians, and in Georgia he learnt Spanish. In 1737 he wrote for help from England, and Whitefield set out for Georgia from Deal on the 2nd February 1738. Wesley had landed at Deal on the 1st February. He was returning, not to back up his written appeal, but to resume work in England. He told Whitefield that it was waste of labour to go to Georgia.¹ However, Whitefield went on, and was much encouraged by what he saw; but, in his numerous visits to America he

¹ This he did by letter, having cast a lot, which decided him not to seek an interview.

worked in other colonies almost as much as in Georgia, where he had the living of Savannah. It was perhaps in order to be free to work elsewhere that he refused the income of the living.

But far more important than any of these schemes for colleges or libraries, or increase of missionaries, excellent as they were in their way, was the attempt to get Bishops for the colonies. A century before this, Laud had seen the necessity of sending Bishops to New England; but the civil war at home had prevented anything from being done, and Cromwell would have put a stop to any such scheme, had it been even begun. At the Restoration, Clarendon was favourable, and a patent was made out for a Bishop of Virginia, who might also have charge of other provinces. Clarendon's downfall caused that scheme to come to nothing. James II., of course, had no interest in any such project, and William III. was not friendly. The colonists who were Anglicans repeatedly petitioned for a Bishop. But the Dissenters both at home and in America opposed the petition; and William, who cared a great deal for Protestantism, but little enough for Episcopacy, listened to the Dissenters.

Under Anne the colonists became more hopeful. Nicholson, the Governor of Virginia, once more pressed for a Bishop; and one reads with surprise that there was some idea of sending Swift.¹ He had at any rate the qualifications of ability and a hatred of Presbyterianism; and at that time (1710) he was eager for preferment. In 1712 a committee of the S.P.G. urged the Queen

¹ Someone wrote, about 1713:—

"A Deanery he has got at last
By ways, most strange and odd,
And may a Bishop be in time,
If he'd believe in God."

Pryings in Private Papers, p. 183.

to help in the matter, and she gave encouragement to a plan for founding four bishoprics, two for the Continent, and two for the islands of Jamaica and Barbados. At Burlington in New Jersey a palace was bought; and then, before anyone was appointed to occupy it, Queen Anne died.

Like William III., George I. did not care about Episcopacy. It was required by the Constitution in England, and George accepted it there; but to introduce it among the colonies was not required. If the question came before him, Walpole would tell him that, under pain of *Premunire*, the English Church could not send out Bishops. But Archbishop Tenison in 1715 left £1000 by will for the purpose, and the S.P.G. petitioned that the scheme of four Bishops, approved by Queen Anne, might be carried out. Then two S.P.G. missionaries, despairing of success with the Government, got themselves consecrated Bishops by some of the deprived Nonjuring Bishops (1723), and sailed for America, where the fact of their being Bishops was kept secret. When it became known in England, one of them, Whelton, was at once recalled, and the other, Talbot, was cashiered by the S.P.G. As the Nonjurors were regarded as hostile to the Government, this method of supplying the colonials with Bishops was not likely to find favour. Bishop Gibson of London, who had not yet offended Walpole by opposing the Quakers' Relief Bill, pointed out the expediency of sending out to America Bishops who would support the Hanoverian succession. But none of the English Bishops seems to have thought it possible to act without the express sanction of the Government. Some of them tried to move the Government to act; but that was all. As the Government disliked new departures, and as the project was opposed by Dissenters both at home and

in America, no action was taken. When Thomas Sherlock became Bishop of London in 1748, he tried to influence the King, pointing out that the Dissenters in America would have no grievance if Bishops were sent thither, for it was not proposed that the Bishops should have any jurisdiction over Dissenters. But although Sherlock cultivated friendly relations with Dissenters in England, he failed to get anything done for the colonies.

Thereupon Bishop Butler, soon after his translation from Bristol to Durham (1750), endeavoured to remove the antagonism of the Dissenters by a scheme that would meet all their objections. (1) The Bishops sent to America were to regulate the clergy in episcopal Orders, but to have no coercive power over the laity. (2) It would not be their duty to interfere with temporal government. (3) The colonies would not be responsible for their maintenance. (4) No Bishops were to be established, where the government, as in Maryland, was in the hands of Dissenters. Butler left £500 for the carrying out of this conciliatory scheme. But, when Archbishop Secker took it up in 1758, violent opposition was again made by the American Dissenters. Secker pointed out that no more was asked for than was required on principles of liberty, the benefits of which "the members of our Church in America do not thus enjoy, having no Protestant Bishops within 3000 miles of them, a case which never had its parallel before in the Christian world." The amount of abuse which the Primate received from Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic, for contending that Anglicans in America had a right to have Bishops, was extraordinary.¹ The Anglican clergy in Connecticut

¹ "That Dissenters did take offence is too true; but the offence, if excusable, was also unjustifiable, and partook of that very exclusiveness to which the existence of Dissent was a standing protest."—(Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, ii. p. 73).

urged this right very strongly in an appeal which they made to the Bishop of London in May 1771. "While Roman Catholics in one of his Majesty's Colonies are allowed a Bishop, and the Moravians are indulged the same favour in another, and every blazing enthusiast throughout the British Empire is tolerated in the full enjoyment of every peculiarity of his sect, what have the sons of the Church in America done that they are treated with such neglect, and are overlooked by Government? Will it not prevent the growth of the Church, and thereby operate to the disadvantage of religion and loyalty?" If the English Government did not care much about the religious life of the colonials, they certainly cared about their loyalty; and George III. would care about both. Archbishop Secker stated that the King was in favour of Bishops being granted, and it looked as if the appeal from the clergy of Connecticut, backed up as it was by Anglican colonists in New Jersey, New York, and elsewhere, would be successful. But other matters of more general public interest had by this time begun to stir the minds of the colonials in their relations with the English Government, and the demand of the Anglicans for Bishops became more hateful to those who were not Anglicans and less important to those who were. The whole question of the rights of the King and his Government over the American colonies had been raised.

By this time George III. had succeeded in making himself almost absolute. The Opposition was divided into three parties, headed by Chatham, Rockingham, and Grenville. Grenville died in 1770, and his followers then came over to the Government, which had a sure majority in both Houses. As a matter of form the affairs of the nation were still conducted by responsible ministers under the control of Parliament. But Parliament was

corrupted, and the ministers were really controlled by an irresponsible King. Lord North, like Bute earlier in the reign, was the King's tool rather than a minister representing the will of the nation. This second attempt at absolute monarchy might have succeeded, but for three important facts. (1) The disastrous conclusion of the war with the American colonies utterly discredited all who had forced it on and conducted it. (2) The growth of a free Press enabled the popular demand for reform to find out its own strength and to give expression to it. (3) The younger Pitt, who became Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four in December 1783, was too strong a man to be made a tool. It is the first of these facts which concerns us here.

It is perhaps idle to speculate, whether the granting of Bishops to the American colonists would have averted the war by allaying irritation in the colonies and influencing opinion at home.¹ During the war the Anglican clergy in America were placed in a cruel position. They were bound to use the English Liturgy with its prayers for the King, and that of course was very distasteful to those who were in arms against the King. The large majority of these clergy were loyal to the home Government, especially in the North, where most of the clergy were missionaries of the S.P.G. But in the South a good many joined in the revolt, and some even fought on that side. At the end of the war there were two Anglican clerics in high command. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority were opposed to the revolt, and continued to pray for the King, made the Anglican Church in America very unpopular. Clergy were sometimes driven out and

¹ Pitt is said to have expressed his belief that, had the English Church been properly represented in America, the United States would never have separated from the mother country.

places of worship destroyed. In Virginia, at the end of the war, only twenty-eight out of ninety-one clergy were still at their posts. The experiences of Charles Inglis, curate to Dr Auchnutz at Trinity Church, New York, are instructive. He had advocated the obtaining of Bishops from England. In 1776, when Washington got possession of New York, Inglis was told that the General would come to Trinity Church, and he must substitute "Commonwealth" for "King" in the prayers. Inglis replied that it was in the General's power to close the building, but not to make the clergy depart from their duty. Inglis retired to Long Island; but, 4th March 1777, Auchnutz died, and Inglis was chosen as his successor. Trinity Church had been burned, and Inglis was inducted among the ruins. He was very unpopular with the new American Government, and in November 1783 he resigned his living and went to England.

As soon as the entire independence of the States was recognized by the articles of peace in November 1782 (ratified 3rd September 1783), American candidates for Holy Orders came to seek ordination from Bishop Lowth. Under existing laws he could not ordain them without requiring declarations which would have compromised their independence as American subjects. He got an Act of Parliament to remove this difficulty, but it gave no power to consecrate Americans as Bishops. So the difficulty recurred when Dr Seabury was sent over by the clergy of Connecticut to seek consecration. Samuel Seabury, like Inglis, an American by birth, had been ordained in England in 1753 and sent as a missionary to New Brunswick in 1754. He was imprisoned for his loyalty and escaped to Long Island, while his church was desecrated and his parishioners were persecuted. All difficulty about his original oath of allegiance to George

III. was removed when the independence of the States was admitted by the King. But no English Bishop had the right to consecrate him unless he again took an oath of allegiance to George III. Consequently, Seabury turned to the Episcopal Church of Scotland, whose Bishops were under no such restrictions. The road to this solution had been opened towards the end of 1782 by a son of Bishop Berkeley, who retained, as Prebendary of Canterbury, his father's keen interest in the colonial Church of America. He conferred with John Skinner, who was consecrated coadjutor to Robert Kilgour, 25th September 1782, as to the possibility of Scotland supplying America with a Bishop. The colonials, he said, might not like to owe their Bishop to a country against which they had just been fighting for their independence; but they could have no such feeling with regard to the Scotch. Unless something of this kind were done for the American Church, it might apply to Denmark or even to Rome.¹ The four Scotch Bishops decided to support Berkeley's scheme; and in an upper room of Bishop Skinner's residence in Longacre, Aberdeen, Dr Seabury was consecrated by Bishops Kilgour, Petrie (of Ross), and Skinner, on Sunday, 14th November 1784. He thus became the first Bishop of the American succession; and he spoke of it afterwards as an advantage that he had been consecrated in this primitive and "purely ecclesiastical" manner. It proved to Americans that his office as Bishop had no dependence upon the Crown or the Parliament of England. Before returning to America he made an agreement with the Scottish Bishops that he would endeavour to restore to the service of Holy Communion

¹ Dr Routh, afterwards President of Magdalen College, Oxford, was also consulted; he persuaded the Americans not to apply to the Danish, but to the Scottish Church.

the fuller form of the Prayer of Consecration and the primitive order of its several parts, which had been preserved in the Scottish Liturgy. He reached Connecticut 27th June 1785, and on the 2nd August was solemnly welcomed by his clergy, from whom he quickly won feelings of the deepest respect by his moderation, learning, and goodness. He presided over them more than ten years, and died at New London, 25th February 1796.

No one in America challenged the validity of Bishop Seabury's consecration. Nevertheless, there was a strong wish in some quarters to obtain Bishops through the venerable and historic line of Canterbury; and soon after Seabury's reception at Middletown there was a convention of clergy and laity at Philadelphia to consider the subject. They sent an address to the English Bishops, in which they expressed their recognition of the kindness which they had received from Bishops of London in particular, and from the Church of England in general through the S.P.G. They stated that they wished to maintain the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England. And they begged that Bishops might be consecrated for them, to enable them to do this more perfectly. This address was sent through Mr Adams, the American minister, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Early in 1786 a friendly reply, signed by both Archbishops and eighteen Bishops, was sent; but action was postponed till the proposed changes in the American Prayer Book could be considered. The Anglican Bishops deprecated the omission of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and of the clause about the Descent into Hell in the Apostles' Creed. The Americans were willing to restore this clause, and also the Nicene Creed, but not the Athanasian Creed. With this the Anglican Bishops were content. An Act of Parliament enabling them to consecrate for America had

been passed; and in November 1786 Samuel Provoost, Bishop-elect of New York, and William White, Bishop-elect of Pennsylvania, sailed for England to receive consecration. In the Chapel of Lambeth Palace they were consecrated, 4th February 1787, by Archbishops Moore and Markham, and Bishops Moss and Hinchcliffe. White was one of those clergy who, on the outbreak of the war, had taken the side of the colonists; and he was made chaplain to the Continental Congress in September 1777. He reached New York on Easter Day 1787, and exercised his episcopal office for nearly fifty years, dying at Philadelphia in 1836. He is regarded as the "Father" of the Episcopal Church in America, and he took part in the consecration of some six-and-twenty Bishops. Charles Inglis, mentioned above, was consecrated first Bishop of Nova Scotia, 12th August 1787. Claggett, first Bishop of Maryland, was consecrated by White, Provoost, and Seabury, in 1792. A third Bishop of the English line was added by the consecration at Lambeth of Dr James Madison of Virginia, President of the College at Williamsburg.

The Anglican Church in America was now independent, and had become the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. It could supply itself with Bishops and clergy, and was no longer compelled either to accept clergymen of questionable antecedents from England, or to leave multitudes of parishes without any clergyman at all. Dr White, the "Father" of this Episcopal Church, lived to see the American Episcopate one of the most honoured institutions in the United States.¹

But the story of the long struggle of the Anglicans in

¹ In connexion with this subject the opening paragraphs of J. H. Newman's essay on "The Anglo-American Church" should be read,—(*Essays Critical and Historical*, i. pp. 308 ff.)

the American colonies to obtain Bishops for themselves would not be complete without some account of the way in which John Wesley, with characteristic self-will and boldness, dealt with this very difficulty in connexion with the Methodists who were working in America. He pleaded necessity, which has no laws; but the step which he took in what he believed to be a case of necessity was momentous, and rendered the severance of the Methodists from the Church of England almost inevitable. The possibility of such severance he had long foreseen, but he declared to the end that he had not taken it, and he implored his followers not to take it. In April 1790 he wrote: "I advise all our brethren that have been brought up in the Church to continue there, and there I leave the matter." In 1791, nine months before his death, he said to his preachers: "Be Churchmen still. Do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you." Yet, on the 1st and 2nd September 1784, less than eleven weeks before the consecration of Seabury by the Scottish Bishops, Wesley crossed the Rubicon between Church and Dissent by assuming Episcopal functions. In a private room in Bristol, assisted by Dr Thomas Coke, formerly curate of South Petherton, and by James Creighton, he ordained Richard Whatecoat and Thomas Vasey as presbyters for the work in America. Then, in conjunction with Vasey, Whatecoat, and Creighton, he "set apart" Coke as "Superintendent" to ordain and discharge other Episcopal functions in the colonies. Charles Wesley was in Bristol at the time, but his brother did not consult him; he knew how strenuously he would oppose such a step; and Charles was much distressed when he heard of it.¹ Even Wesley seems to have had

¹ "Alas!" he wrote, "what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, best friends!" For the details see Southey,

misgivings. He did not speak of himself as consecrating, but as "setting apart" or "appointing"; and he did not call Coke a "Bishop," but a "Superintendent." Coke also, though he got the American Conference to give him the title of Bishop, and the following December set apart Francis Asbury as deacon (25th) presbyter (26th), and superintendent (27th), seems to have had misgivings, for in 1791 and 1792 he conferred with Bishops Seabury and White as to the possibility of obtaining Episcopal consecration for himself and Asbury, and ordination for all the Methodist ministers in America. But, although the principals on both sides were ready to adopt this healing measure, they were not supported by public opinion, and the proposal came to nothing.

From the Methodist point of view, this revolutionary manner of dealing with the American difficulty is justified. "If there was any imprudence on the part of Wesley in this emergency, it was certainly in his long-continued patience. When he yielded, it was only after the acknowledged independence of the American colonies, and not then till urged to it by his most revered counsellors. Fletcher of Madeley was one of them."¹ Let us hear what Wesley himself says of this step. "Lord King's account of the primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right

Life of Wesley, ch. xxvii. Charles had been equally distressed when John in 1764 got a Greek Bishop named Erasmus to ordain Staniforth and one or two others.—(Fitchett, *Wesley*, p. 365.)

¹ R. Green, *John Wesley, Evangelist*, p. 508, from the *History of Methodism* by Abel Stevens, ii. p. 213. Stevens calls it "an act of as high propriety and dignity as it was of urgent necessity" (p. 215). Coke's ordination of Asbury he calls "one of the most important ecclesiastical events (whether for good or evil) of the eighteenth century, or indeed since the Reformation, as its historical consequences attest" (*ibid.*).

to ordain.¹ For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops, who have a legal jurisdiction; in America there are none, neither any parish minister; so that, for hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end, and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's rights, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest. I have accordingly appointed Dr Coke and Mr Francis Asbury to be joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national Church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays, and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken."

¹ It is remarkable that in Lord King's *Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church* (written when he was only twenty-one) he condemns as "unaccountable impudence and a most detestable act of schism," the performing of "ecclesiastical administrations" without the permission of the Bishops.

But Wesley did not at all approve of the title of Bishop being assumed by Coke and Asbury. He wrote to the latter: "How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me Bishop." This was probably in order to avoid giving offence to friends in England; but in this Wesley is less logical than usual. If Coke was to exercise all episcopal functions, why not call him a Bishop? He was already in priest's orders, so that his commission was evidently different from that of Vasey and Whatcoat, and superior to it. Wesley evidently intended to make Coke what is called a Bishop. In his abbreviated Anglican Prayer Book he retained three separate forms for the ordination of deacons, elders, and superintendents. And he seems to have raised no objection to the Methodists whom Coke and Asbury superintended being called the "Methodist Episcopal Church in America."

Having once taken this momentous step, Wesley continued to avail himself of the advantages which it offered. Next year, 1st August 1785, he "set apart" Pawson, Hanley, and Taylor for work in Scotland. In 1786, Atmore and Keighley were set apart for Scotland, Hammet for Newfoundland, and Warrener for Antigua. There were five such ordinations in 1787, and seven in 1788, Alexander Mather being made a Superintendent. Respecting the earlier ordinations Wesley had said in 1786 that, "whatever is done in America and Scotland is no separation from the Church of England." But that distinction seems to have been abandoned a little later. On Ash Wednesday 1789, Wesley, with James Creighton and Peard Dickenson, both of whom were Anglican

clergymen, ordained Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin as presbyters, "to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the usages of the Church of England." Here there was no limitation of sphere to America or Scotland.¹ At the time of Wesley's last illness Moore was working in Bristol. He was with Wesley at his death, 2nd March 1791, and became one of his literary executors.

In order to complete the story of Wesley's ordination of men for work in America, the limits of this chapter have been slightly exceeded. But it will be noticed that down to the year 1786 he had not taken on himself to ordain men for work in England. And it is quite a mistake to suppose that those whom he ordained were merely set apart for ministerial work such as a layman may discharge, and that they were not to administer the sacraments. That they might administer the sacraments to those who were far away from an episcopally ordained minister was the very purpose for which Wesley took this step.

¹ J. H. Overton quotes D. Urlin as questioning this (*John Wesley*, p. 206, 1905). W. H. Fitchett admits it (*Wesley and his Century*, p. 417).

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE CONSECRATION OF TWO BISHOPS FOR
AMERICA IN 1787 TO THE END OF THE
CENTURY IN 1800

THE year 1787 again brings before us the question of religious liberty. It came prominently before the country the month after the consecration of White and Provoost as Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York. On 28th March 1787, Henry Beaufoy, the member for Great Yarmouth, proposed in the House of Commons the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. These Acts were greatly mitigated in their action by the Indemnity Acts which were passed almost every year as an indulgence to Dissenters. Nevertheless the grievances of Dissenters were still real and heavy. A Dissenter could hold no civil office and no commission in army or navy, could take no part in the management of the Bank of England, Indian, Russian, Turkish, or South Sea Companies, however many shares he might possess, unless he qualified by taking Communion according to the ritual of the English Prayer Book. If he took office without this qualification, he was liable to imprisonment or a heavy fine, and became almost an outlaw. For the rest of his life he could not become guardian to a ward, or bring an action at law, or receive a legacy. It was impossible to defend these outrageous penalties on the plea that they were necessary for the protection of the Established Church. In Scotland and in Ireland the

Established Church existed without any such protection. The Test Act had been repealed in Ireland in 1779. Beaufoy was the son of a Quaker who had been educated in Dissenting academies, and was well versed in the cause which the Dissenters placed in his hands to plead in Parliament, where he was a supporter of the ministry. He pointed out the absurdity of allowing a Dissenter to be a member of Parliament, and yet preventing him from being a member of a Corporation or a director of a Turkish Company. By its extravagant exaction of oaths at entering on petty offices, the legislature had made perjury so frequent that no one thought anything of it. The Sacramental Test was even worse; it caused horrible profanity. There was no other example in history of the legislators of a country deliberately prostituting the most sacred ordinance of their own creed, by making it the passport to petty offices in the Customs or Excise, and pleading that this impious profanation was required in the interests of the Church. The men who had been appointed to these offices might be notorious evil-livers. How could a clergyman do his duty in repelling such persons from the Holy Communion, when the law of the land compelled the evil-livers to receive the Holy Communion? Fox heartily supported Beaufoy. These Acts imposed a serious penalty on a minority for their conscientious adherence to their religion; and this minority was in morals most respectable, and in political antecedents most meritorious. It was very improbable that this minority would ever become a large majority. But, if it did, and if the large majority of the nation decided that the Established Church ought to be abolished, then the abolition ought immediately to follow.

Lord North, who was now infirm and becoming blind, although he was only fifty-five, opposed the repeal of the

Acts. So also did Pitt, not because he was an advocate for religious intolerance, but because he did not wish to provoke the hostility of the Church by abolishing penalties, which were not very grievous, for they were not very strictly enforced. That position was worthy of Robert Walpole. Pitt asked Archbishop Moore (1783-1805) to consult his suffragans; and by about ten to two, the Bishops were for maintaining the Acts. Moore's own view was that repeal would prove disastrous to religion. So Pitt decided to oppose repeal. He said that it was not unreasonable to exclude from office men who on principle were hostile to the ecclesiastical side of the Constitution. The Sacramental Test was not meant to exclude all Dissenters from office: it excluded only those who had such *animus* against the Church as to refuse to communicate with it.¹ Pitt was in favour of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and, no doubt, if he had relied on his own judgment, he would have repealed the Test and Corporation Acts. But the episcopal veto seemed to him to be fatal; and we need not be surprised at the veto. In that age the idea was so rooted that the safety of Church and State depended upon the exclusion of Dissenters from office, that it is marvellous that two Bishops could be found who took the more enlightened view. These were Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St Asaph (1769-1788), and Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff (1782-1816). In 1779, when the Test Act in Ireland was repealed, Shipley had declared for the repeal of all the laws against Dissenters. Such enactments, he said were "the disgrace of the National Church." And he had supported the American colonies in their claims for independence, but for which he might have succeeded

¹ This, on the whole, was Swift's line in his *Letter* on the subject in 1708; Pitt may have read the *Letter*.

Cornwallis as Primate in March 1783, instead of Moore. But did anyone point out the wide difference between the proposal to relieve Dissenters from these Acts and the proposal to relieve Anglican clergy from subscription to the Articles? Doctrinal tests for clergy, who have to teach in a Church which has creeds, are one thing: doctrinal tests, or religious tests of any kind, for those who have to hold office in the State, are quite another. The argument, "If you are not fit to receive the Holy Communion, you are not fit to hold office," is sure to lead to another, "I am fit to hold office, and therefore I am fit to receive." The profanation of the Sacrament which these Acts produced was distressing. But it does not seem to have shocked very many of the clergy; and it was not very likely to shock a man of the world like Pitt. After a debate of seven hours, the motion for repeal was defeated by 178 to 100.

Dr Priestley, who was in the gallery of the House during the debate, addressed a letter to Pitt on the subject of *Toleration and Church Establishments*. Cowper, in his *Expostulation*,¹ wrote on the same side, as did others. In May 1789, Mr Beaufoy again brought forward his motion, and was again supported by Fox, who said that no human government had a right to inquire into private opinions. This time the numbers were 122 to 102, which the advocates for repeal regarded as almost a

¹ Hast thou by statute shov'd from its design
The Saviour's feast, his own bless'd bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a pick-lock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write;
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.

victory. They determined to work with increased energy by committees and addresses, and to try again in 1790. But the French Revolution completely changed the prospect. The excesses in France and the outspoken comments of Fox, Priestley, and others who had sympathized with the violent convulsion on the Continent convinced the majority of the Commons that what had taken place there might take place in England also. It probably did not help the Bill's chance of success that this time (2nd March 1790) Fox had charge of the measure. His approval of the French Revolution was well known, and it prejudiced his audience. But he made a powerful speech. He had always understood that the leading feature of religion was charity; but did Churchmen exhibit it in retaining these persecuting Acts? For centuries Christianity had existed without any such props; but now, religion was not to depend upon the truth of its evidence, nor the Church on its own merits; it must be supported by civil authority. The cause of the Dissenters was that of the universal rights of mankind. Powys replied that the principles laid down by Fox would admit even Jews to offices of trust; to which Fox cried, "Hear, hear." Burke said that ten years earlier he would have voted for repeal, but now he must oppose it.¹ He quoted from Dissenting catechisms and from the writings of Priestley and Price to show that their teaching tended to the abolition of all Established Churches; and on this ground William Wilberforce said that he must oppose the repeal. Fox replied that, if Dissenters thought that Church Establishment, or any other civil institution, was a bad thing, they had a perfect right to say so. The

¹ It is remarkable that at this time, in the case of two genuinely liberal measures—free trade with Ireland and repeal of the disabilities of Dissenters—we find Burke on both questions in opposition. Fox opposed Pitt's Irish Bill, and Pitt opposed Fox's Dissenters' Bill: but Burke opposed both.

motion was lost by 294 to 105. Thus the cry of "The Church in danger" was once more successfully raised to influence the House of Commons; but this time it would have had much less success, if events in France, showing what had happened to Church and King in that country, had not emphasized it, and if there had not been a Burke ready to express the emphasis in glowing language.

In spite of all the extravagance which had marked the doings of the National Assembly, there was much with which liberal-minded Englishmen, acquainted with their own history, could sympathize.¹ They knew what had been done in England in opposition to tyrannical kings and oppressive ministers. Fox, as often, expressed his sympathy in an ill-advised way; and then Burke once more rose to his old level. The eloquence and earnestness with which he had opposed American Taxation returned to him. In a speech on 9th February 1790 he had protested against the approval which Fox had expressed for the perilous doctrines of the French Assembly.² It was the first of a series of speeches and writings which are among the best that have been produced by any English orator, and their effect in the country was immense. And as the French Revolution increased in extravagance and horror, so did the influence of Burke's denunciations of it increase. Of course the English court, aristocracy, and clergy had been against the National Assembly from the first. Burke's appeals drew over to the side of reaction

¹ Wordsworth was one of these. He gave enthusiastic approval, so long as it seemed to him to be the expression of simple republican sentiment protesting against monarchical tyranny. When it seemed to him to be destroying all the social and religious sentiments which hold men together, he turned against it. To this Browning's cruelly unjust *Lost Leader* refers, a reference which he regretted in later life.

² The Revolution had been foreseen by Lord Chesterfield, but his predictions were little heeded at the time.—(Craig, *Life of Lord Chesterfield*, pp. 314, 353.)

many who had been generously disposed towards the reform movement in France. The French Revolution has had many tragic outcomes: one of them is that the incompetence and cruelty of those who conducted it made one, who had hitherto been a leader of reform, turn round and oppose changes which might, he thought, produce enormities such as those which were visible in France. Thus the cause of true reform suffered in England, and indeed throughout Europe. Pitt had thought that the convulsion would soon be over, and his aim was to keep England from interfering. But the aggressiveness of France at last made non-intervention impossible, and Pitt himself was obliged to join Burke on the side of reaction, and to abandon peace and reform for a costly war and connivance at abuses. He was driven to this not merely by the outrages of the new French Republic, but by the violence of the language used by those who sympathized with it in England. Fox, instead of pointing out the enormous differences between the two nations and their conditions,¹ himself talked like a Jacobin, and Sheridan was even more violent than Fox. Burke had only to quote their utterances to convince many that what they advocated would end in atheism and anarchy, as in France. Burke's mistake lay in supposing that the old French Constitution could have been reformed: it was corrupt in every detail, and nothing short of destruction would serve.² It was not revolutionary writers or speakers who produced the outburst. It would have come, if these

¹ In England, the King was popular; the Government was guided by a popular statesman, who had put the finance of the nation into excellent condition; the rich were not exempt from taxation; there was no antagonism between the law-courts and the Government; literature, led by Johnson and Burke, was conservative; there was no violent hostility between class and class; no Bastille, and no *lettres de cachet*.

² See T. Seecombe, *The Age of Johnson*, p. 73.

teachers had never lived, or had thrown their influence into the other scale. They hastened the catastrophe, but they did not produce it. That had been done by centuries of corruption and oppression. The life and fire of this volcanic effort of outraged human nature came from below.

But the mistake was not all on Burke's side. Fox, Sheridan, Francis, Erskine, and others were mistaken in failing to see that the system which the French Revolutionists were setting up was worse than the one which they had swept away; and that it was all the more criminal because it was not the insensible growth of ages but the deliberate construction of professed reformers. The Edict of Fraternity (19th November 1792) ought to have opened their eyes; in it the Jacobins proposed to force their ideas of freedom upon the whole civilized world, and those who were rash enough to entertain the proposal soon felt their rapacity and their insolence. And the Edict of Fraternity had been preceded by the massacres of the royalists in the French prisons in September, and was followed by the execution of the King (21st January 1793). Since the Massacre of St Bartholomew, no event in a foreign country had sent such a thrill of horror through England as the execution of Louis XVI. The crime was denounced from thousands of pulpits; theatres were closed; the whole nation went into mourning; and when George III. drove out, the mob shouted after him, "War with France." Fox himself said to the electors of Westminster that, outside France, there was no one who "did not consider this sad catastrophe as a most revolting act of cruelty and injustice."

It says something for the spirit of religious toleration in England that, in spite of the reaction caused by the

French Revolution, a book so liberal in its teaching as Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* became a text-book at Cambridge, and went through fifteen editions in twenty years (1785-1805). Paley argues for complete toleration of all who dissent from the religion established by law. Subjects have a right to dissent from the religion preferred by the Government, and to interfere with this is "a needless violation of natural liberty." Locke had drawn the line at atheists: "Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God." Swift would have the law prohibit all questioning of "those tenets, which have been held inviolable almost in all ages by every sect, that pretends to be Christian." Paley knows better: "Under the idea of religious toleration, I include the toleration of all books of serious argumentation." But the argumentation must be serious. Society has a right to protect itself against wanton profanity. To stop the circulation of ribald mockery of sacred subjects¹ "is no infringement of religious liberty."

Throughout Europe, the eighteenth century was an era of new departures: that, in England, it did not close with a harvest of reforms, for which the time was ripe, was chiefly owing to the blighting influence of the French Revolution. These reforms had long been advocated by a number of devoted workers, but they had to be postponed till the scare caused by the Jacobins had passed away. But for that, the eighteenth century might have seen the reform of Parliament, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the repeal of the penal laws against Unitarians, and the abolition of the Slave Trade. It did see the passing of Relief Bills for Roman Catholics. The failure of the orthodox Dissenters to get rid of the Test and Corporation Acts has already been noticed.

¹ Comp. *The Spectator*, No. 389, 27th May 1712.

The failure of the effort on behalf of the Unitarians is equally instructive.

The iniquitous Act of William III. left Unitarians exposed to penalties. In 1792 Fox tried to get this repealed, and to give Unitarians the benefit of the Toleration Act, from which they and Papists had been expressly excluded. Lord North himself supported Fox. He said that he had not at all changed his mind as to the Test and Corporation Acts; they were necessary for the protection of the Church of England. But to punish a man because he was unable to accept Trinitarian doctrine was religious persecution pure and simple. The Unitarians were not seditious; if they became so, the law could deal with them. Pitt took the other side. The French Revolution had shown how cautious one must be in changing any laws respecting religion. And Burke was again an opponent of reform. The careful notes which he made for his speech are still in existence. He had no sympathy with the school of Hoadly, which contended that the State has nothing to do with religious opinion. Religion is so far from being out of the province of the magistrate, that it ought to be his chief care. Religion is one of the great bonds of society. A reasonable and moderate amount of coercion may prevent very great evil. What kind of coercion may be employed? That, said Burke, depends largely upon circumstances. If religion related only to the individual, human authority would have no right to interfere between man's conscience and God. But it is otherwise, when men form new combinations, distinguished by new names, and especially when they mingle a political system with their religious opinions. Governments must not permit religion, which ought to be one of the bonds of society, to be made the pretext for destroying the order, liberty, and security of

society. Parliament had never acted on the assumption that it had nothing to do with religion: it had examined the claims of numerous sects, each of which had a position defined by law. These old religious factions are burnt-out volcanoes: on the ashes of extinct eruptions the olive and the vine are now growing. But, if a new fire bursts out, a face of desolation comes on, not to be rectified in ages. English law knows nothing of Unitarians, and Parliament ought not to give them a legal existence. The writings of Priestley showed that the sect was not purely theological, but political. It sympathized with the revolutionists in France, and it aimed at overthrowing the Established Church in England. Let the Unitarians disband as a faction and act as individuals. Then they may enjoy their conscience in peace, and it will be safe to vote them relief.¹ Pitt and Burke prevailed by 142 votes to 63. It was not till 1812 and 1813 that Unitarians won legal toleration for their worship.

How was it that, although the Protestant Dissenters and the Unitarians failed in their application to Parliament for relief, the Roman Catholics succeeded? Because the panic caused by the Revolution in France, which told against the other two bodies, told in favour of the Romanists. The Revolution had terrified everyone who desired to uphold Crowns and Churches; and it was felt that the Roman Church was now a support rather than a menace to monarchical government and religious truth. It was a conservative force in Europe, and as such had been swept out of France by the revolutionists. In England the danger of a Roman Catholic restoration was at an end;

¹ Compare Montesquieu's maxim: *Voici donc le principe fondamental des Loix politiques en fait de Religion. Quand on est le maître de recevoir dans un Etat une nouvelle Religion ou de ne la pas recevoir, il ne faut pas l'y établir; quand elle y est établie, il faut la tolérer* (*Esprit des Loix*, XXV. x.). Voltaire and Rousseau said much the same.

Charles Edward was dead, and Jacobite policy was dead. Romanists in England need no longer be regarded with fear or suspicion. As against republican tendencies, they were supporters of monarchy; as against infidelity, they were for religion. The Anglican Bishops supported the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. So also did Burke. He declared his conviction that if atheists destroyed Romanism, neither Anglicanism, nor any other form of Protestantism, would survive: Jacobinism would occupy the field. Moreover, a good many of the penalties to which Romanists were liable had for many years never been inflicted. No priest was now tried for treason; no one was now fined or imprisoned for hearing mass, or for keeping a Romanist school, or for sending his children to a Romanist school on the Continent. Why keep such unjust penalties among legal possibilities?¹ And why should Romanists any longer be excluded from command in the army and the navy, from the legal profession, and from voting for members of the House of Commons?

The Bill for the relief of Roman Catholics in England passed in 1791;² and in 1793 a similar measure was carried for Romanists in Scotland. The memorable session of 1793 opened on the 10th January. One passage in the speech from the throne was worded in a very unusual manner. "I have it in particular command from his Majesty to recommend it to you, to apply yourselves to the consideration of such measures as may be most likely to strengthen and cement a general union

¹ In the debate in the Commons it was stated that seventy pages of Burn's *Ecclesiastical Law* were occupied with the penal statutes still in force against Romanists. As Blackstone said: "It ought not to be left in the breast of every merciless bigot to drag down the vengeance of these occasional laws upon inoffensive, though mistaken, subjects."

² It opened the profession of the law to them; but they were still excluded from being officers in the army or navy.

of sentiment among all classes and descriptions of his Majesty's subjects in support of the established Constitution: with this view his Majesty trusts that the situation of his Majesty's *Catholic subjects* will engage your serious attention; and in the consideration of this subject he relies on the wisdom and liberality of Parliament." Never, since the reign of James II., had the term 'Catholic' been used in a speech from the throne. Romanists were called 'papists' or 'persons professing the popish religion.' In 1792 the term 'Roman Catholic' was used; and now, in 1793, 'Catholic.' It was proposed by Doyle and Knox that a clause should be added to the Government Bill to give Romanists admission to Parliament. The future Duke of Wellington was put forward by the Government to oppose this. He said that the Bill, as it stood, contented Catholics and did not dissatisfy Protestants. Why agitate a question which might disturb both? In 1829, when, against his own pledges, he had to grant Roman Catholic Emancipation, he perhaps wished that the question had been settled in 1793.¹

The influence of the French Revolution in retarding reform is illustrated by the changed attitude of Pitt and of Burke. Down to 1791, Pitt was a Whig and a reformer. Then, after a period of suspense, he joined the other party, and withheld further reforms, not as being unnecessary, but as inopportune and likely to encourage "French principles." Like Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth in their early days, he began by sympathizing with the popular rising against tyranny in France. In 1790 he was perplexed about it; in 1791 he was inclined to condemn it; in 1792 he was convinced that it was

¹ But, even forty years later, Roman Catholic Emancipation was regarded by some fanatics as so wicked that, from the pulpit, the visitation of cholera in 1832 was spoken of as a national punishment for it.

anarchical and dangerous, but he hoped that armed activity against it might be avoided; before 1793 arrived he saw that war was inevitable, and after the execution of Louis XVI., he thought it worth while to have the war a little earlier, in order to have the support of strong popular feeling against France. But it was the French Republic, and not Pitt, which made war between England and France inevitable; and it was the French Convention, and not the English Government, which declared war in February 1793. At home Pitt not only withheld reforms, but sanctioned repressive measures, which were perhaps excusable, but hardly necessary. There was a proclamation against seditious writings, and a Traitorous Correspondence Act, forbidding all intercourse with France without special licence. The *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended, and the right of public meeting restricted, because members of the Corresponding Society and of the Constitutional Society uttered rubbish in support of French atrocities.

Burke, from the first, had been opposed to the French democratic movement, and spoke strongly against it, 9th February 1790. Much of that year was spent in writing the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, which appeared 1st November, and had an immense effect on both sides of the Channel. It went through eleven editions in twelve months, and was sharply answered the following year in Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791). "Time, the stern summarist, tends to show the shallowness of Paine's mathematical demonstrations and the depth of Burke's apologies and suggestions" (Secombe, *Age of Johnson*, p. 87). Burke's forecast of the future is more remarkable than his estimate of the past. Many people in England thought that the Revolution was over. Burke declared that the monarchy would go, and the Church, or indeed Christianity itself. "If possible, the

next Assembly would be worse than the present." True political freedom was not to be obtained by "ferocious dissoluteness in manners, and an insolent irreligion in opinions and practice." Most remarkable of all was the prophecy that the outcome would probably be a military despotism of extreme character—"the most completely arbitrary power that has ever appeared on earth."

It might be thought that such a question as the abolition of slavery would not be affected by the French Revolution: but it was quite otherwise. Not only did the course of events in France raise urgent questions which drew attention from the controversy about slavery, but the dread of all great changes caused change in this large matter to be regarded with dislike. Moreover, the proposal to abolish the slave trade and make the holding of slaves unlawful was an interference with property on a very large scale; and it was a general disregard of the sacredness of property which had characterized the upheaval in France. Above all, the Jacobins were for abolition; therefore all who abhorred the Jacobins and their principles must oppose abolition. In spite of the prodigious efforts of philanthropists, this most necessary and most obvious reform was delayed until long after the close of the century.

In 1767, Granville Sharp procured the release of a runaway slave, Jonathan Strong, from an English prison, and then was prosecuted by his master, David Lisle, for unlawfully detaining his property. In 1772 he successfully fought the case of James Sommersett, and obtained the momentous decision that "as soon as any slave sets his foot upon English territory, he becomes free." In 1735, Thomas Clarkson won the prize at Cambridge for a Latin essay on the lawfulness of slavery, and in 1786 published it in English. On 22nd May 1787, a committee was

formed for the suppression of the slave trade, consisting of Granville Sharp (President), Clarkson, Philip Sanson, and nine Quakers. About the same time, William Wilberforce, who was already interested in the question, was encouraged by Pitt to take action in Parliament on the matter, and it was largely owing to his energy and perseverance that complete success was at last won. But he was ill when the subject was first brought before Parliament, 9th May 1788, and Pitt took charge of the question. It was shown that the mortality of negroes during the voyage ranged from 45 to 80 per cent. Sir William Dolben proposed that the number of slaves carried in the ships must be in proportion to the tonnage. This interference with the liberty of the owners was furiously opposed; but the Bill at last became law.

Early in 1791, 24th February, the dying Wesley sent Wilberforce a message urging him to persevere. After an all-night debate Wilberforce's motion for putting a stop to the exportation of slaves from Africa was negatived by 163 to 88 on the 19th April. This was a grievous blow to the abolitionists, for Pitt, Burke, and Fox had all supported the motion; but they persevered. A year later Wilberforce succeeded in carrying a motion for the gradual abolition of slavery; and now the numbers were 238 to 85. By a small majority the date for abolition was fixed for 1st January 1796. The Upper House decided to hear evidence, and this opened the door to indefinite delay. In 1794, Clarkson's health broke down, and until 1805 he could do nothing outside Parliament, while Wilberforce lost rather than gained ground in the House of Commons. Not until 1807 did abolition pass the House of Lords and receive the royal assent. Not until August 1833 were the 800,000 slaves in the West India Islands freed, twenty millions being granted as compensa-

tion to the owners. Wilberforce lived to hear that the second reading had passed, and died 29th July.

It is humiliating to notice how small a part the leaders of the Church took in initiating this noble movement. Granville Sharp, Clarkson, and Wilberforce were Churchmen, and Clarkson, although he very soon ceased to act as a clergyman, was a deacon. As early as 1779, Sharp began corresponding with many of the Bishops, with a view to founding a society for the abolition of slavery; but, as we have seen, when a committee was at last started in 1787, there was no Bishop on it, and three-quarters of the members were Quakers. As early as 1727 the question had been discussed by the Quakers, and in 1758 members of the Society were charged to have nothing to do with the slave trade, nor make any profit out of it.¹ A little later it was decided that any Friend who persisted in "conduct so reprehensible to Christianity" should be excluded from the Society. In 1783 they drew up a petition to Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade, which Lord North said did them great credit. In 1788 the Baptists took up the movement, and a good many other religious bodies followed suit. The different dioceses took up the good work. "Even Bishops," says Clarkson, "deigned to address an obscure committee, consisting principally of Quakers. Churchmen and Dissenters forgot their differences of religious opinion, and joined their hands all over the kingdom, in its support." Among the Bishops who took an active part in the good work, after it had been initiated, was Beilby Porteus of Chester (1776-87) and of London (1787-1808). He preached a sermon in February 1783, and published a pamphlet in 1784, urging the S.P.G. to set a good example to slave-owners

¹ Penn had been a slave-owner.

by freeing the slaves on their estate in Barbados ; but the fact that he failed, shows how much work was needed in order to rouse the conscience of the nation on this subject. In the sermon he stated that, a slave ship being short of water, the captain caused 140 negroes to be brought on deck and thrown into the sea. When Sir William Dolben's Bill for mitigating the horrors of slave-carrying came to the Upper House, Bishop Porteus strongly supported it, but, at first, in vain. And, when the money left by Robert Boyle for missionary work in America was no longer needed for that purpose, owing to change of circumstances, he got it transferred to a Society for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the West Indies. Still earlier than Porteus, Bishop Warburton of Gloucester (1759-79) publicly condemned the slave trade. This was in a sermon before the S.P.C.K., 21st February 1766.¹ But probably no Bishop was a slave-owner. Whitefield had slaves in Georgia, and James Hervey, rector of Weston Favell, sent him £30 with which to buy another slave in 1751. In all the writings of Burke is there any denunciation of this monstrous evil? Wesley protested against it in 1772.

On his deathbed John Wesley had sent a message of encouragement to William Wilberforce to persevere in his battle with the iniquities of the slave trade. On his deathbed he also continued his own efforts to prevent the Methodists from separating from the Church. It was better to become Dissenters than to cease to preach ; but he prayed God that the necessity might never come.

¹ A few lines may be quoted. "In excuse of the violation of all things civil and sacred, it hath been pretended that, though these miserable outcasts be torn from their native wilds by force and fraud, yet this violation of the rights of humanity improves their condition. Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves what it is that makes their own happiness."

Yet it may be said with truth that, whatever we may think about the necessity for Dissent, the separation from the Church had already begun, before Wesley passed away, 2nd March 1791. For many years he had seen that separation was possible, or even probable; and it is perhaps not unjust to say that, in spite of his frequent declarations of his own position as a devoted member of the Church of England, and in spite of his continued appeals to those Methodists who were Churchmen not to cease to be Churchmen, the separation was his own work. It is not unusual to lay the gradual departure of the Methodists into formal Dissent upon the rigidity of the Church's system, the antagonism or lukewarm indifference of nearly all the bishops, and the ignorant or interested prejudices of the large majority of the parochial clergy. No doubt all these things contributed to make separation appear to be desirable, and to hasten its accomplishment after it was desired. But there are good reasons for believing that the departure would have taken place, even if the Church of England had exhibited greater elasticity, if all the Bishops had been as willing to see the good points of Methodism as were Potter, Benson, Gibson, and Lowth, and if the clergy generally had seen that they had a great deal to learn from the zeal, energy, and courage of the Methodists. Wesley tells us of one Bishop who took a reasonable view of the position. An opponent of Methodism said to him: "My Lord, what must we do to stop these new preachers?" The Bishop replied: "If they preach contrary to the Scriptures, confute them by Scripture; if contrary to reason, confute them by reason. But beware you use no other weapons than these, either in opposing error or in defending the truth." Bishop Butler's famous remark to Wesley is of the same kind. It is sometimes excused on the ground

that Butler was influenced by the almost universal dread of 'enthusiasm.' But Butler's declaration that "the pretending to extraordinary revelation and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a very horrid thing" needs no excuse. People who made so prodigious a claim were bound to give evidence of its truth. Dr Johnson gave the common sense of the matter some thirty years later. "Speaking of the *inward light*, to which some Methodists pretended, he said it was a principle utterly incompatible with social or civil security. "If a man pretends to a principle of action of which I can know nothing, nay, not so much as that he has it, but only that he pretends to it; how can I tell what that person may be prompted to do? When a person professes to be governed by a written ascertained law, I can then know where to find him" (Boswell, 1770). But Convocation was silenced, and there was no assembly in which the more liberal-minded and reasonable Bishops could make themselves felt: and the Archbishops made no attempt to get their suffragans to come to any common decision as to the treatment of Methodism. Probably none of them liked it; a few were willing to tolerate it as a passing enthusiasm; most of them denounced it as mischievous. But they had no consistent view of it as a whole, and no line of policy respecting it. In short, while Methodism was a living force, with a message to deliver and a position to defend, the Bishops and clergy had neither, but only a puzzled attitude, varying from timid admiration to furious hostility. And the fact that the Methodists were neither welcomed and disciplined, nor confronted with definite principles and convicted of error, made them all the more positive that their way was the only right one, and that all who wished to be religious must follow them.¹

¹ See J. H. Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical*, i. pp. 404-411.

This assumption of superiority was fatal to continued union. Dr Stoughton has justly pointed out how inevitable it was that, in spite of Wesley's desire to remain in fellowship with the Established Church, Methodism should "loosen itself from its original moorings and drift into the open sea" (p. 163). The spirit of separation was in the movement from the first; and nothing which could counteract this was ever generated within it, or adopted from the outside. The strong convictions of Charles Wesley, even when backed by the strong will of his brother, were inadequate to neutralize the natural tendency of the new forces; and it is easy to see that some of the acts, both of Whitefield and of John Wesley, tended clearly in the direction of Dissent. It was not their fault that the practice of field-preaching had this effect. Seeing that multitudes never came to any place of worship at all, it was obvious that, if they were to be reached, the Gospel must be taken to them in the fields, or streets, or wherever they congregated. It is deplorable, that, with the example of our Lord and His Apostles before them, any people should have found fault with so necessary an arrangement. Nevertheless, preaching in the open air was so alien to the ideas of Churchmen in that age, and was supposed to be so opposed to propriety and the dignity of religion, that the adoption of it looked like defiance of the rules of the Church. Even John Wesley himself had a feeling that it was repugnant to decency and order, when Whitefield first began it; as if there was something wrong in preaching the Gospel outside the walls of a Church.

Nor was it the fault of the Methodist leaders that the discipline of the Church of England seemed to be violated, when Wesley commissioned laymen to preach. This again was no invasion of the special functions of an

ordained ministry, and necessity could be pleaded in its favour. The ground to be covered was so immense, and the ordained ministers who were available for this great effort to reach the godless population were so few. When some of the lay preachers took upon themselves to administer the Holy Communion, Wesley sharply rebuked them and forbade the practice. Thus far we may say that it was the fault of Churchmen rather than of the Methodist leaders that the conduct of the latter was regarded as being hostile to the Church. On the other hand, it was inevitable that the movement should often be regarded as hostile, when the Methodist preacher entered a parish and, without consulting the incumbent, or perhaps in defiance of his wishes, began his missionary labours: all the more so, if the Methodist publicly criticized the incumbent for neglect of his flock.

It was otherwise, when Whitefield took to preaching in Dissenting chapels, and persisted in doing so, in spite of episcopal remonstrance. He wished to have the advantages of both systems. As a clergyman of the Church of England he claimed to be allowed to preach in parish Churches, and seemed to think that he ought to be admitted to the pulpit, whenever he liked to ask for this. He regarded it as a grievance that he was often refused. At the same time he claimed to be free from the discipline of the Church of England. The whole world was his parish; and therefore he could not admit that the officers of the Church of England had any right to prevent him from ministering in any place of worship to which he could gain admission.¹ Still

¹ The Dissenters themselves saw the flaw in this position. "The indifference which this great man expressed for all the peculiarities of ecclesiastical order appeared to them, not only unscriptural, but founded on the enthusiastic assumption, that he was called to mind greater things."—(Bogue and Bennett, *Hist. of Dissenters*, iii. p. 167.)

more clearly did Wesley go a long way in the direction of separation from the English Church, when he took upon himself to "set apart" "Elders" and "Superintendents," first for work in America, then for work in Scotland, and finally for work in England. He might avoid using the words, though he did not always do so: but what he had essayed to do was to ordain presbyters and to consecrate Bishops. In the case of America he might plead that it was a case of necessity; but this plea was less available for Scotland, and wholly inadmissible in the case of England. Church government is at an end, if any presbyter may take upon himself to ordain other presbyters, whenever he thinks it advisable to do so. Here Wesley deliberately took a step which he must have known amounted to rebellion against constituted authority and separation from it.

And Wesley had clearly claimed for the Methodists the position of being undenominational. "There is no other religious society under heaven," he wrote, "which requires nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all around you; you cannot be admitted into the Church, or Society, of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinion, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion; but they think, and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship; but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the days of the Apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us. What Society

shares it with us?" A teacher who could use such language as this ought not to be surprised if his followers drew from it the conclusion that, as they could be good Methodists without joining the Church of England, so they might remain good Methodists after leaving the Church of England. He implored Church people to abide in the English Church, but he smoothed the way for their departure from it.

There was another step which amounted to formal separation from the English Church, but it was forced upon Wesley by the ungenerous rigour of others. In order to secure toleration for his chapels and preachers he was obliged to have them registered as Dissenting conventicles and Dissenting ministers. As was stated above, the action of the Methodists in parishes was such as would be sure to provoke hostility. The hostile party could at once place them in a dilemma. "If you are not Dissenters, you must work under the direction of the incumbent and the Bishop; if you are Dissenters, you must be licensed as such." As early as 1767, some magistrates refused to license Wesley's preachers, unless they accepted the *status* of Protestant Dissenters: and this position they accepted at first most unwillingly.¹ At last, in 1787, Wesley took this step for the whole body. With sorrow and indignation at being, as he said, driven out of the Church, he placed his meeting-houses and preachers under the Act, which freed Dissenters from penalties. In so doing, however, he avoided calling them 'Dissenting': his ministers were licensed as 'preachers of the Gospel.'

The Deed of Declaration, enrolled in the Court of

¹ Methodists at Norwich had placed themselves under the Toleration Act in 1760. The significance of Wesley's step is pointed out by Dr Stoughton (p. 186).

Chancery, February 1784, constitutes the charter of Wesleyan Methodism. Under it the first Conference met after Wesley's death in 1791, and arranged the British Isles into 'circuits.' The question of the administration of the Eucharist forthwith became a burning one. Out of respect to Wesley, it had been kept under during his lifetime; and many Methodists wished still to adhere to the custom of resorting for Holy Communion to ministers who had been episcopally ordained. Others, however, were strongly opposed to this restriction; and in 1795 the Conference decided that, although the custom was to be encouraged, yet it need not be rigidly observed. Under certain conditions, the preachers might administer the Lord's Supper. This may perhaps be considered as the last step in the gradual process of separation. Side by side with it may be placed the abandonment of the custom of having no Methodist services at the same hour as public worship in the Churches. Wesley had to a large extent abandoned this custom himself. London and Bristol were exempted from it, and a few other places for special reasons, even before 1788. Then Wesley gave leave to all congregations to use their discretion, except on Sacrament Sundays. After his death the custom entirely died out.

But it must not be supposed that the old Dissenters at once welcomed the Methodists as an acquisition. "What impartial judge of human nature will wonder," say the Dissenting historians, "that the elder sects should look with the jealousy which accompanies strangeness upon a people emerging from the establishment, without professing to differ from it, and yet combining this unaccountable latitude with a liberal quantity of highchurch prejudices. . . . It appeared to them immaterial whether an ecclesiastical synod was called a conference or a con-

vocation, if the ministers assumed a legislative authority over the people."¹ As to the condition of the Methodists after the death of Wesley, let us listen to the same witnesses. "Though much deduction be allowed for the sectarian zeal which prevails among them, great praise is still due to their persevering efforts to call sinners to repentance. But the want of competent knowledge in the great body of their preachers has nourished error and enthusiasm among the people, and too fully justified the heavy censure which has been passed upon this communion, as containing a greater sum of ignorance of the Scriptures than was ever found in any body of protestants since the reformation."² As to their zeal for souls, the foundation of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1799 is evidence.

The separation of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion from the Church of England was very similar to that of the Wesleys. In both cases the separation was against the wishes of the originator of the movement, and in both cases circumstances rendered the separation inevitable. Lady Huntingdon's one absorbing purpose was to secure places in which what she believed to be evangelical teaching should be given, if possible, by Anglican clergy, but at any rate by some kind of minister. The Articles and Homilies were to be the standard of doctrine, and the Prayer Book the model of worship. As a peeress she claimed the right of having as many chaplains as she pleased, and she protected clergy who were accused of Methodism by giving them this position. She sold

¹ Bogue and Bennett, iii. p. 166. R. Philip says that Whitefield won no sympathy from Dissenting ministers in London; "Bradbury lampooned him; Barker sneered at him; Dr Watts was silent; and Coward's trustees were insolent to Dr Doddridge, because he gave him some countenance at Northampton."—(*Life and Times of Whitefield*, p. 252.)

² Bogue and Bennett, iv. p. 391.

her jewels and built a large chapel at Brighton in 1761. Other chapels were erected up and down Sussex, and for the upper classes she secured places of worship and preaching at Bath and Tonbridge as well as in London. In 1779 her right to this enormous development of the power of appointing private chaplains was disputed, and in the trial in the Consistorial Court the decision went against her. Like Wesley, she was driven to take refuge under the Toleration Act; and her ministers and chapels were registered as Dissenting ministers and Dissenting places of worship (1781.)

Four years later another decisive step was taken, and again there is close resemblance to the conduct of Wesley. One may truly say that both he and the Countess were driven, against their most earnest desires, to seek protection for their ministers and chapels, by declaring them to be Dissenting. But there was no compulsion with regard to the second step. At Lady Huntingdon's chapel in Spa Fields, which had provoked the fatal appeal to the Consistorial Court, an ordination was held, 9th March 1783, by two clergymen who were only presbyters.¹ In a service that lasted five hours they protested that the ecclesiastical courts had so harassed the ministers in that chapel that they felt obliged to secede from the Establishment. They delivered a Bible to each of the two candidates, and laying their hands upon them said to each: "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and administer His appointed ordinances, in the

¹ The action of both Wesley and the Countess is covered by the well-known verse :

"How easily are bishops made
By man or woman's whim !
Wesley his hands on Coke has laid,
But who laid hands on him ?"

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Parochial clergy, such as Berridge, Romaine, Venn, and others, who had been her chaplains, could not accept the legal position of Dissenting ministers, and they therefore withdrew from Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, although they did not cease to take an interest in her labours. The generous praise which J. H. Newman bestowed upon these in *The British Critic*, nearly seventy years ago, ought not to be forgotten. She was "a person simply and unconditionally giving up this world for the next. This must be right, whoever does it, and whatever else is right or wrong. So far Lady Huntingdon gained a point, and sets Christians of all times an example. She devoted herself, her name, her means, her time, her thoughts, to the cause of Christ. She did not spend her money on herself; she did not allow the homage paid to her rank to remain with herself: she passed these on, and offered them up to Him from whom her gifts came. She acted as one ought to act who considered this life a pilgrimage, not a home—like some holy nun, or professed ascetic, who had neither hopes nor fears of anything but what was divine or unseen. And such she was in an age which particularly required a witness that such things could be, or that it was possible to love anything better than the goods of life. . . . She was the representative, in an evil day, of the rich becoming poor for Christ, of delicate women putting off their soft attire and wrapping themselves in sackcloth for the kingdom of heaven's sake. . . . When faith and love are in any measure met with in the history of religious error, they outweigh much of extravagance, much of absurdity, nay, of buffoonery, and even of unreality, which somewhere or other, will

be sure to make its appearance in those who figure in it."¹

The friendly correspondence between Archbishop Wake and certain members of the Gallican Church had long ago ceased, and the refuge which England offered to the French clergy who had been driven out of France by the Revolution had not caused the question of possible union to be renewed. The efforts of some of the Nonjurors to get a hearing from the Eastern Church had passed away even more completely, and no one in England bestowed a thought upon the Oriental Christians, much less desired any intercourse with them. All idea of closer relationship with Protestant Churches on the continent, whether by inducing them to adopt episcopacy and the English Liturgy, or in any other way, had ceased to excite interest either in England or elsewhere. Nor were the relations between the Established Church and the English Dissenters as good as they had been in the first half of the century, when Latitudinarian Bishops and Nonconformist leaders were often good friends. The Methodists had severed themselves from the Church, and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion had done the same. Possibly, in God's providence, there was in all this a husbanding of powers for a great Anglican development in the future. Be this as it may, the Church of England, at the close of the eighteenth century, was in a state of extreme isolation.

It was largely in missionary enterprise that the philanthropic energy which marks the closing years of the eighteenth century, especially in circles influenced by the Evangelical school, manifested itself. The Naval and Military Society, for supplying sailors and soldiers with Bibles or Testaments, was begun in 1780, Bishop Horne

¹ J. H. Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical*, i. pp. 387-9.

being one of the promoters; and the heathen condition of both army and navy is shown in Swift's *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*, 1709. The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795, the Church Missionary Society and the Religious Tract Society in 1799. These Societies tended in the direction of religious tolerance and Christian unity. People who differed about the details of Christian doctrine and discipline found that they could unite in the work of making the Gospel known to those who had never heard it. It was during the last years of the century that Wilberforce was working hard to bring home to the English Government and people the magnificent opportunities, which were being so strangely neglected, of making the truths of Christianity known to the countless inhabitants of the newly acquired territories in India. The little that had been done in India up to this time illustrates what has just been said about the healing influences of missionary work. For years the S.P.C.K. had been working harmoniously with Danish and German Lutherans. The name of Christian Frederick Schwartz, who visited England on his way to India in 1749, and died at Trichinopoly in 1798, must be remembered in this connexion.

And it may be said that the work done by England for India, grievously inadequate as it was, already brought a reward to the mother country before the century closed. This was when Dr Andrew Bell returned to England from India in 1796. In that year a society had been founded for "Bettering the Condition of the Poor," especially in the way of providing industrial schools. He had been in India since 1787 as army chaplain and educationalist. As superintendent of the Madras Male Orphan Asylum he had immense success (1789-96), and became the founder of the "Madras system" of education,

by means of which, in his own words, "a school or family may teach itself under the superintendence of the master or parent." The main point of this was mutual instruction; the children were trained to teach one another. Bell found that a quick boy of eight could teach the alphabet to other children by writing on the sand and making them imitate him. Then he found that this plan was applicable to other subjects; and in time almost every boy in the school was alternately a pupil and a teacher. His success was all the more remarkable, because the half-caste children under his care were morally very unsatisfactory material. But, by encouraging the boys to share, not merely in the teaching, but in the working arrangements of the school, he produced in time a better moral tone; and he claimed with justice to have "almost wrought a complete change in the character of a generation of boys." A break-down in health made him return to England; and in 1798 he introduced his system at St Botolph's, Aldgate, and then into schools at Kendal.¹ The history of the partly similar and partly rival system of Joseph Lancaster, and of the miserable quarrel between the two originators—"Bell and the Dragon," as they were called--belongs to the nineteenth century. The dispute was greatly aggravated by the fact that Bell was supported by Churchmen, while Lancaster had the sympathy of those who preferred sectarian education. Coleridge and Wordsworth approved of Bell, and Southey was an enthusiastic supporter. No doubt the good points of the system were over-rated; but it reduced the cost of schools, and it helped to

¹ At Burgdorf (1799) and at Yverdon (1803) Pestalozzi tried the plan of mutual instruction. But with him it was a temporary expedient: he could not get enough teachers, so the children must teach one another. With Bell it was the mainspring of the system; even if enough masters could be had, there was more stimulus in teaching the boys to teach one another.

gender self-reliance and a sense of responsibility. The controversy with Lancaster was a passing evil; and there was permanently good result in the foundation of the National Society. In this way, through the awakened interest in general elementary education, England received from India a very substantial return for the attention which it was at last beginning to pay to that vast country's spiritual needs.

The last great event in the century, the Union of Ireland with England, under one Imperial Parliament, belongs to politics rather than to Church History. But it was brought about by a difficulty that was in the main religious and closely connected with the Established Church. Moreover, the non-fulfilment of a promise which related to religion produced another political crisis which affected the whole kingdom. Pitt saw that, as long as Ireland had a Parliament of its own, there would never be peace in that country: it was impossible to induce the Protestant Parliament to admit Roman Catholics, or to abstain from confiscating Roman Catholic property. So he set to work to abolish it, and to transfer its members to Westminster, as the Scottish members had been transferred under Queen Anne. By a lavish distribution of titles, offices, and money, he induced a majority of the Irish Parliament to vote for the transfer, letting it be understood that he intended to propose that Roman Catholics should have equal rights with Protestants. He gave no pledge that this would be done; but he allowed Cornwallis to secure the votes of Romanists on the supposition that Roman Catholic Emancipation was to follow. Most unhappily, Lord Chancellor Loughborough secretly persuaded George III., that to allow Pitt to give the promised equality to Romanists would be a violation of his Coronation oath. After that, nothing would induce the King to yield. Pitt

felt bound in honour to propose Emancipation; and, as he was not allowed to do so, he resigned. "He thus brought to an unhappy conclusion a period of office, of which our annals show no rival in length of time, in magnanimous devotion, in splendid achievement."¹

¹ C. Whibley, *William Pitt*, p. 261.

CHAPTER VII

SOME LEADERS OF ENGLISH THOUGHT AS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

IN forming an estimate of the character of any age we must give much weight to those who were the chief leaders of thought in that age. That is specially necessary in coming to any definite conclusion respecting the character of the eighteenth century in English History. There perhaps will not be very much dispute as to who the leaders of English thought were. If our choice were restricted to two, there would be no dispute. Swift is certainly the most commanding intellectual power in the first half of the century; and Dr Johnson is almost as certainly his successor, in influence if not in genius, in the second half. And it is remarkable, that both these leaders of English thought represent the century in which they passed their days, by exhibiting in their own lives features which have called forth almost opposite estimates of their work and character. As was pointed out in the first chapter, widely different conclusions have been reached as to the leading characteristics of the eighteenth century. Scarcely less different conclusions have been reached respecting the merits of Swift; and to a large extent this may be said even of Johnson. Both of them have received very full measure of admiration; and both, but especially Swift, have been subjected to damaging depreciation or positive abuse.

Johnson's own estimate of Swift is an instance of damning with faint praise. In characterizing the writer

and the man, he cannot set aside his personal dislike. Boswell says: "He seemed to me to have an unaccountable prejudice against Swift; for I once took the liberty to ask him if Swift had personally offended him, and he told me he had not." Thus, Johnson gives very high praise to the *Tale of a Tub*, but tells us that "it has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed or never exerted." Sir Walter Scott thinks that in one peculiarity Swift is among the most gifted. "It is the distinguished attribute of *Originality*; and it cannot be refused to Swift by the most severe critic. Even Johnson has allowed that perhaps no author can be found who has borrowed so little." Lady Mary Wortley Montagu says that "Swift has stolen all his humour from Cervantes and Rabelais." Sir James Mackintosh says that Swift's "style is, in its kind, one of the models of English composition; it is proper, pure, precise, perspicuous, significant, nervous, deriving a certain dignity from a masterly contempt of puerile ornaments, in which every word seems to convey the intended meaning with the decision of the writer's character." Hume thinks that Swift's style "has no harmony, no eloquence, no ornament, and not much correctness, whatever the English may imagine"; and Lord Jeffrey regards it as "utterly without the glow and loftiness which belonged to our earlier masters."

The divergence of view is still greater when we compare different estimates of Swift as a man. "Swift was a wild beast," writes Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, "who worried and baited all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed." "In the talent of debasing and defiling what he hated," says Jeffrey, "we join with the world in

thinking the Dean of St Patrick's without a rival." In the *Edinburgh Review* (lvi. 538) Macaulay calls him "the apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured lover—a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race, a mind richly stored with images from the dunghill and the lazar-house"; and in his *History of England* (ch. xix.), "at heart the haughtiest, the most aspiring, the most vindictive, the most despotic of men." And there is no need to quote any portion of the very readable lecture in which Thackeray has done more perhaps than any writer to give English people unjust ideas respecting Dean Swift. And yet Dr Delany, Prebendary of St Patrick's, who knew Swift from about 1718, and intimately for many years, could write to Lord Orrery: "When you consider Swift's singular, peculiar, and most variegated wit, always rightly intended, although not always so rightly directed, delightful in many instances, and salutary even where it is most offensive; when you consider his strict truth, his fortitude in resisting oppression and arbitrary power, his fidelity in friendship, his sincere love and zeal for religion, his invincible patriotism, even to a country which he did not love, his various, well-devised, and extensive charities throughout his life, charities from which he could enjoy no advantage of any kind in this world; when you consider his ironical and humorous, as well as his serious schemes for the promotion of true religion and virtue;—all this considered, the character of his life will appear like that of his writings; they will both bear to be reconsidered and re-examined with the utmost attention, and always discover new beauties and excellences upon every examination."¹

¹ See Allibone's *Critical Dictionary of English Literature* for many other quotations, both favourable and unfavourable to Swift. Leslie Stephen considers Delany "the best contemporary authority, so far as he goes."

With less temptation to be partial, we may say with Gosse, that, ferocious and paradoxical as Swift was, he was "essentially and passionately a lover of good things. So vehemently on the side of purity and liberty and sanity, that he does not mind seeming dirty and unfair and mad. The greatest original intellect in pure literature between Dryden and Wordsworth." "To deny the ferocity is impossible," says Leslie Stephen: "but it may be forgiven by those who recognize some of the noblest of qualities soured by hard experience. His insight is as keen as it is one-sided, and his genuine hatred of vice and folly seems always to be tinged with a recognition of the futility in this world of virtue and wisdom." The ferocity may also be forgiven by those who remember that the mental decay which clouded Swift's last years had probably begun much earlier, and affected both his judgment and his temper.

When we examine estimates of the chief guide of English thought in the second half of the eighteenth century, a similar dissonance reveals itself. In the case of Dr Johnson the estimates are commonly in the main, if not exclusively, laudatory: but there are some decided exceptions. Very severe things have been said of him, not only as a writer and a critic, but also as a man. "Nobody now reads the *Rambler* or the *Idler*," says Alison, "and the colossal reputation of Johnson rests almost entirely upon his profound and caustic sayings recorded in Boswell." Lady Mary W. Montagu called the *Rambler* "a strange misnomer. He always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the *Spectator*—with the same pace as a packhorse would do a hunter—in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper." Hazlitt says: "After closing the volumes of the *Rambler*, there is nothing that we remember as a new truth gained

to the mind; nor is there any passage that we wish to turn to, as embodying any known principle or observation with such force and beauty that justice can only be done to the idea in the author's own words": and he calls *Rasselas* "the most melancholy and debilitating moral speculation that ever was put forth." Brougham condemns the *Rambler* still more strongly: "It would not be easy to name a book more tiresome—indeed, more difficult—to read, or one which gives moral lessons in a more frigid tone, with less that is lively or novel in the matter, in a language more heavy and monotonous. The measured pace, the constant balance of the style, becomes quite intolerable." Nor have Johnson's criticisms of other writers escaped strong condemnation. "There are parts of the *Lives of the Poets*," says John Foster, "which every lover of literary and moral justice would be glad to see stamped with an indelible brand of reprobation, with a disgrace so signal and perspicuous as to be a perpetual warning against the perversion of criticism and private history by political and religious bigotry and personal spleen." Prescott is equally severe on the *Life of Milton* in particular: "A production more discreditable to the author is not to be found in the whole of his voluminous works . . . a humiliating testimony of the power of political and religious prejudices to warp a great and good mind from the standard of truth."¹

Judgment on his unfairness in criticism brings us close to adverse judgments upon his character and manners. When Gibbon was asked why he did not talk more in the presence of Dr Johnson, he took a pinch of snuff and replied: "Sir, I have no pretensions to the ability of contending with Dr Johnson in brutality and insolence." Sir James Mackintosh is probably right in saying that

¹ See Allibone's *Dictionary of English Literature*.

Johnson's "brutal, intolerant manners" excluded him from "those circles where men of letters mix with the fashionable world." He met *good* society at the club and in some private houses; but he was not admitted to *fashionable* society. The *petit maître*, Horace Walpole, has told us in his *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.* (ii. 323), what fashionable society thought of him. "With a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. By principle a Jacobite, arrogant, self-sufficient, and overbearing by nature, ungrateful through pride, and of *feminine* bigotry, he had prostituted his pen to party, even in a dictionary, and had afterwards, for a pension, contradicted his own definitions. His manners were sordid, supercilious and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and, in one word, with all the pedantry, he had all the gigantic littleness, of a country schoolmaster." And in a letter to the Hon. H. S. Conway, 6th October 1785, he writes: "The more one learns of Johnson, the more preposterous assemblage he appears of strong sense, of the lowest bigotry and prejudices, of pride, brutality, fretfulness, and vanity." One more estimate of him, from a writer of our own day, may be added. He was "a man of vigorous but contracted understanding, the slave of prejudices and superstition that would disgrace a peasant—coarse in his habits, brutal in his language, honest in his errors, whom the English obstinately revere as a critic and a wit, though almost every page of his writings shows that he was as incapable of appreciating the highest order of poetry as a blind man would be of appreciating Raphael; and the collection which has been made of his sayings, though occasionally enlivened by vigorous expression and poignant repartee, contain many more proofs of obstinate prejudice, illogical evasion, and downright brutality. The redeeming

qualities of his moral character were manliness, and a rude but touching benevolence : a most retentive memory, and strong natural sense, that sometimes dissipates the mist of inveterate prejudice, are the characteristics of his understanding : of anything like refinement or philosophy he is altogether destitute."¹

Somewhat the same kind of excuse for Johnson's irritability and rudeness may be made as for Swift's ferocity. Although Johnson did not live to experience mental derangement, yet, like Swift, he lived in dread of it. Young says that he once heard Swift say : "I shall be like that tree ; I shall die at the top" : and Johnson, in his later years, confessed to a fear that he should one day go mad. He said he had had experience of "disturbances of mind very near to madness," and he told Boswell that he "inherited a vile melancholy" from his father, "which has made me mad all my life, at least not sober." There is no need to balance the adverse judgments upon Johnson with an equal number of favourable estimates : such verdicts abound both in contemporary and later writers. In Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (ii. pp. 374-376) a well-considered criticism of him will be found, to which the reader may be referred. Enough has been quoted here to justify the remark that the great intellectual figure in the latter half of the century, like that of the still more powerful figure in the earlier half, resembles the period which their combined activity covers, in having evoked pronouncements as to merit and demerit of widely divergent and almost contradictory character. If the eighteenth century has been both greatly abused and greatly praised, so also have been its two chief representatives in the world of thought, Swift and Johnson.

¹ John George Phillimore, *The Reign of George III.*, i. pp. 116, 117.

But no literary period, and least of all such a period as the eighteenth century, can be adequately represented by a couple of workers. Great as was the influence of Swift and of Johnson, there were not a few others who, even when compared with them, were far removed from insignificance. Shall we add six more representative leaders in literature and thought? Let them be Pope and Bolingbroke, Butler and Berkeley, Warburton and Burke. Every one of the six has, to a considerable extent, the characteristic which has already been pointed out as remarkable in Swift and Johnson: they have all of them called forth from critics a large measure both of praise and blame. Warburton himself illustrates this with regard to Pope; for he began by laughing at him, and then became one of his warmest defenders. About Pope's representative character there cannot be much doubt. "Pope reflects all the contrary influences that were struggling in English imagination during the first half of the eighteenth century. He threw into a form of metrical criticism ideas of a kind that were engaging the attention of the best writers in the *Spectator*. He invented a form of unrivalled brilliancy to reflect the passing manners of aristocratic society. The ambiguous theology of the time provided him with materials for didactic poetry. Alike in his poetry, his criticism, and his correspondence, we seem to see the mind of the country taking an external shape during the period of struggle that followed the first establishment of Civil Liberty."¹ But, granting Pope's representative character, what were his merits? Was he our greatest poet after Shakespeare and Milton, or was he no poet at all? Was he, at best, a great artist in verse, or, indeed, only a mechanical maker and polisher of

¹ Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, v. p. 156.

rhymes? These, and kindred questions, have been discussed since Pope's own day, and we are not yet agreed about the answers.¹ We have the enthusiastic praises of Byron and De Quincey, and the chilling depreciations of Jeffrey and Sir Samuel Brydges, and are not quite ready to follow either. And to decide on Pope's moral character is one of the most perplexing problems in English biographies. Was he, at bottom, a generous and affectionate man, who sometimes erred through physical infirmity and morbid sensibility? So his intimate friend Bolingbroke seems to have thought, for he says of him: "I never in my life knew a man who had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind." Or was he, at heart, mean, malignant, and deceitful, with occasional good impulses, which he sometimes followed? Macaulay would have us believe this. "Pope's whole life," he says, "was one long series of tricks, mean and malicious. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure and insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocation, was the habit of his life." Or was he only no worse than other people, though much more clever? "We hear sometimes," says Mark Pattison, "of Pope's peculiar 'malignity.' But he was only doing what everybody around him was doing, only with a greatly superior literary skill." We are ready to agree with the poet Gray, who wrote to Horace Walpole about two years after Pope's death: "It is natural to wish the finest writer (one of them) we ever had should be an honest man. It is for the interest even of that virtue, whose friend he professed himself, and whose beauties he sung, that he should not be found a dirty animal." And Gray is inclined to credit him with "humanity and goodness

¹ See Elwin and Courthope, vol. v. ch. xvi.

of heart, ay, and greatness of mind."¹ It is, no doubt, true that some who began their study of him with the desire to admire him have had to give him up, as their knowledge of him grew. Is it possible to know him still better, and recover, not only respect, but affection? The "thousand little vanities and weaknesses mixed with those good qualities" are perhaps not beyond the reach of pardon.

Pope's "guide, philosopher, and friend,"² is a less conspicuous example of opposing estimates. But while all Bolingbroke's contemporaries have agreed in regarding his oratory as superb, and while most people are still agreed as to the grave defects in his character,³ yet he has had admirers and defenders in Pope, Chesterfield, Smollett, and William Belsham, and in our own days in Robert Harrop, who gives him credit for elevating an ignoble struggle for place into a chivalrous effort to preserve by purifying the spirit of the old monarchy. Such he thinks is the aim of Bolingbroke in his writings.⁴ If, instead of Bolingbroke, the statesman, we substitute Robert Walpole as a representative of the eighteenth century, we shall have a still stronger instance of the same man receiving both high praise and severe condemnation from competent critics, both in his own time and our own.

We find the same fact confronting us when we turn to criticisms of the works of Butler and Berkeley. There is no need to quote the opinions of leading writers who

¹ 3rd February 1746. In our own day it has been said of him that "this little brilliant man of letters, who had a host of admirable qualities, was an arch-deceiver and a miracle of half-hypocritical artfulness."—(Gosse, *English Literature* iii. 201.)

² *Essay on Man*, iv. 390.

³ Hearne, 24th July 1719.—Mrs Elizabeth Montagu, letter to Gilbert West, 14th November 1754.—(*Correspondence*, ii. pp. 61, 62; see also p. 163.)

⁴ *Bolingbroke: a Political Study and Criticism*, p. 295.

have, during more than a century and a half, put a very high value on the philosophical arguments of these two great thinkers. But there are important witnesses on the other side. Mr Pitt is reported to have said of the *Analogy* that it opened as many questions, and raised as many doubts, as it solved. James Mill, while regarding Butler's argument as conclusive against the Deists, found it useless, or worse, for those who cannot see their way to accepting Deism.¹ James Martineau considered that Butler had unintentionally supplied "one of the most terrible persuasives to Atheism." Other objections have been raised by Matthew Arnold, Fairbairn, and Leslie Stephen. It has been said that he answers difficulties by doubling them. A difficulty is pointed out in Revealed Religion, and Butler says that there is a similar difficulty in Natural Religion. When a man has already got over the difficulty in Natural Religion, Butler can help him to get over the parallel difficulty in Revelation: but the pair of difficulties may lead him to give up all religious belief. So also with Berkeley, to whom Pope ascribed "every virtue under heaven." His *Principles of Human Knowledge* were intended to destroy the materialistic arguments for Atheism, and to prove the necessity of the existence of a Divine Mind, whose perception of the universe is the only security and explanation of the existence of the universe. But Hume maintained that Berkeley's "works form the best lessons of skepticism which are to be found among the ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted." And Hume himself went on to ask whether the metaphysical argument which Berkeley applied to the outer world of matter was not equally applicable to the inner world of mind. The question is still asked whether it is the sceptic or the idealist who can with most justice

¹ J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, pp. 38 ff.

claim Berkeley as his master. Berkeley himself had foreseen this. "The same Principles which, at first view, lead to Skepticism, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to Common Sense" (*Principles of Human Knowledge*, Dial. iii.).

And there is no need to quote laudatory estimates of Burke, whether as an orator, or a statesman, or a writer.¹ But it has been reasonably maintained that the political philosophy with which he illumined statesmanship became a snare to him. He was so convinced that Constitutions are not made but grow, that at last he became unwilling to have anomalies and abuses cut away, because they were natural growths. The equilibrium of the Constitution was so delicate, that the least displacement might destroy it. And the French Revolution intensified this opposition to reforms. He saw the fallacies of Rousseau's theories for the reconstruction of society, and he saw the atrocities which the exponents of such views committed. But if there had been no Rousseau and no atrocities, Burke would have denounced the Revolution and opposed every change that might be represented as tending to a revolutionary policy in England. As Macaulay says of him: "He generally chose his side like a fanatic, and defended it like a philosopher." As J. R. Green says: "The very intensity of his belief in the natural development of a nation seemed to render him incapable of understanding that any good could come from particular laws or special reforms."²

With Warburton it is the other way: it is not the praise of him that hardly needs to be illustrated by

¹ See Mrs Elizabeth Montagu's letter to Mrs Elizabeth Carter (*Correspondence*, ii. p. 159). "Burke at his best is England at its best" (Lord Acton).

² *Short History*, chapter x. John Morley quotes very divergent estimates of Burke in his own excellent sketch of him in *English Men of Letters*, ch. i.

quotation, but the blame. Adverse criticism of him abounds. He is allowed to be a representative man, but representative of some of the evil characteristics of his century. He is said to represent its bad taste and bad manners; a man who gloried in being a bully, and erected rudeness into a fine art; a controversialist who cared only for victory, and not at all for truth, and who would use any argument or abusive language to get the better of an opponent; a divine, whose idea of theology was that it offered boundless opportunities of denouncing those who differ from you; and a prelate, whose idea of the Church was that it had good openings to preferment, into which one must force one's way by attracting the attention of those who had posts to bestow. It is perhaps true of him that he aimed at being an intellectual giant, and expected to be regarded as having the kind of authority which Dr Johnson actually possessed.¹ But, whereas Johnson was much more brusque and brutal in conversation than on paper, Warburton's brutality was exhibited chiefly in his writings. When Byrom first met him (31st March 1736), just after the *Alliance between Church and State* was published, he was struck, not by any rudeness of Warburton in a long talk on religious matters, but by his rejection of Canticles, or at any rate of the allegorical interpretation of the Song.² Some years later, in his *Epistle to a Gentleman of the Temple* and again in his *Essay on Enthusiasm* (1751), Byrom rather severely censures Warburton. The letter of

¹ Johnson's opinion of Warburton is too good to be omitted: "The table is always full, Sir. He brings things from the north, and the south, and from every quarter. In his 'Divine Legation' you are always entertained. He carries you round and round, without carrying you forward to the point; but then you have no wish to be carried forward."—(Boswell, 1781.)

² "The stupidity of these learned people when not moved by the Holy Ghost, to reject the finest works, which are proved to be such by the comments of the Saints upon them!"

remonstrance which Warburton wrote to him from Bath (12th December 1751) is a model of dignified courtesy; and it ends "your affectionate servant and faithful brother in Christ—W. Warburton." Byrom replied in a long letter (22nd February 1752), and again received a very courteous letter from Warburton (3rd April 1751), in which the latter said: "Though I reckoned you in the number of those who had thought fit to write against me, I by no means put you into their rank whose abuse is praise. You are found in that which the best writers aspire to: modesty, therefore, should not hinder you from reflecting, that a dash from your pen is not an indifferent matter."¹ *The Alliance between Church and State* is an endeavour to justify the condition of things in England at the time, —an Established Church, with a Toleration Act on one side and a Test Act on the other; and even those who revolt from its Erastianism may admit its cleverness. "If we regret that Warburton's talents were employed rather to dazzle than to win enduring influence, we must recognize how great those talents were. He had a good deal of insight into some prevailing evils, and a power of wit and sarcasm, which are probably unrecognized because he is abused a great deal more than he is read. To him is attributed the maxim, 'Orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy is other people's doxy.' His definition of a Protestant ought to commend him to certain modern partisans: 'A sovereign contempt for the authority of the Fathers and no great reverence for any other is what nowadays constitutes a Protestant.' But the merits of Warburton are greater and more real than the utterance of a few incisive epigrams. He had a certain robustness

¹ *Remains of John Byrom*, ii. pp. 522-535. Gibbon's remark is much to the point: "The real merit of Warburton was degraded by the pride and presumption with which he pronounced his infallible decrees."—(*Memoirs*, 1770.)

and common sense, which were the *cachet* of his age. And withal he was never stupid. His cardinal fault he shared with his age. His method was purely negative, and he is always happiest at destruction. The notion that the way to root out error is by knock-down argument is at the bottom of most of the writing of the time, and is the cause why so little of the controversial literature of any age is of enduring value."¹

The great merit of the eighteenth century lies in the abundant supply of common sense which is conspicuous in its religion, its morality, and its philosophy. Its defect lies in its poor supply of anything more than good sense, and in its want of appreciation for anything higher or deeper. It took the facts of life, that is, of human nature and of the universe, and by a calm and cold observation of them arrived at definite conclusions, which may seem to us to be inadequate, but which cannot be condemned as untrue. In religion it found its way to a scheme, in which the claims of benevolence and of 'cool self-love' were found to coincide in prescribing conduct, which received Divine sanction in the shape of rewards and punishments both in this world and the next. And (as many were willing, with Locke, to admit) this scheme has been confirmed by Christ; it comes to us, not merely as a series of reasoned conclusions, but as a body of commands, put forth by one who, by His miracles, proved that He was the representative of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Those who could not follow Locke in this were content to abide with Pope, in whose *Essay on Man* we have a poetical version of the commonly accepted creed. Those who wanted more, and did not see their way to a reasoned ground for accepting more, were willing to follow

¹ J. Neville Figgis, *William Warburton in Typical English Churchmen*, pp. 214-252.

Johnson, who refused to puzzle himself with speculation which might prove to be destructive. Common sense showed that religion is needed, and the best plan is to adopt the generally accepted creed. "Higher light than that immediately *practical* one; higher virtue than an honest Prudence, he could not then communicate; nor perhaps could they have received: such light, such virtue, however, he did communicate. How to thread this labyrinthic Time, the fallen and falling Ruin of Times; to silence vain Scruples, ho'd firm to the last the fragments of old Belief, and with earnest eye still discern some glimpses of a true path and go forward thereon, 'in a world where there is much to be done, and little to be known': this is what Samuel Johnson, by act and word, taught his Nation; what his Nation received and learned of him, more than of any other."¹ The poet Gray, who could not abide Johnson's bearish manners, fully agreed with his view of religion. "Atheism is a vile dish, though all the books of France combine to make new sauces for it. As to the Soul, perhaps they have none on the Continent; but I do think we have such things in England."²

This remark of Gray's illustrates another characteristic of the century,—its complacent, and even indolent, self-sufficiency, and its readiness to look with contented pride upon the happy condition of England, especially when compared with that of other countries. Many people were of Dr Johnson's opinion, "that the English nation cultivated both their soil and their reason better than any other people," and would have agreed with him in asking, "Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation, *For anything I see, foreigners are fools?*" "Sir, I question if

¹ Carlyle, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, in *Miscellaneous Essays*, iii. p. 93.

² Letter to Walpole, 17th March 1771, a few months before Gray's death.

in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together: the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they knew no more than the women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of the women." Lord Chesterfield warns his son against the English habit of telling foreigners that English customs "are a thousand times better" than theirs. The same feeling of insular optimism is found in Thomson's *Seasons*, especially in the panegyric on Great Britain in the latter part of *Summer*, e.g.:

Island of bliss ! amid the subject seas,
That thunder round thy rocky coast, set up,
At once the wonder, terror, and delight,
Of distant nations.

The morality of the age exhibits the same features as its religion: it is good common sense, and no more. The millennium is a long way off, and we need not waste our time in Utopian dreams. Beware of cant and fine phrases, and store your mind with the solid facts of daily life. All men are *not* equal, and the first lesson that we have to learn is subordination. The established order of things is not perfect; mend it, if you can. But meanwhile make the best of it: work and don't whine. However serious the imperfections may be, they are better than anarchy. And, if there is anything more foolish than optimistic imaginations, it is pessimistic despair.

It is perhaps not a very high theory of life, but it is very practical, and it is in the right direction. It is also close to the Apostolic commandment, "Love the brotherhood, Fear God. Honour the King."

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